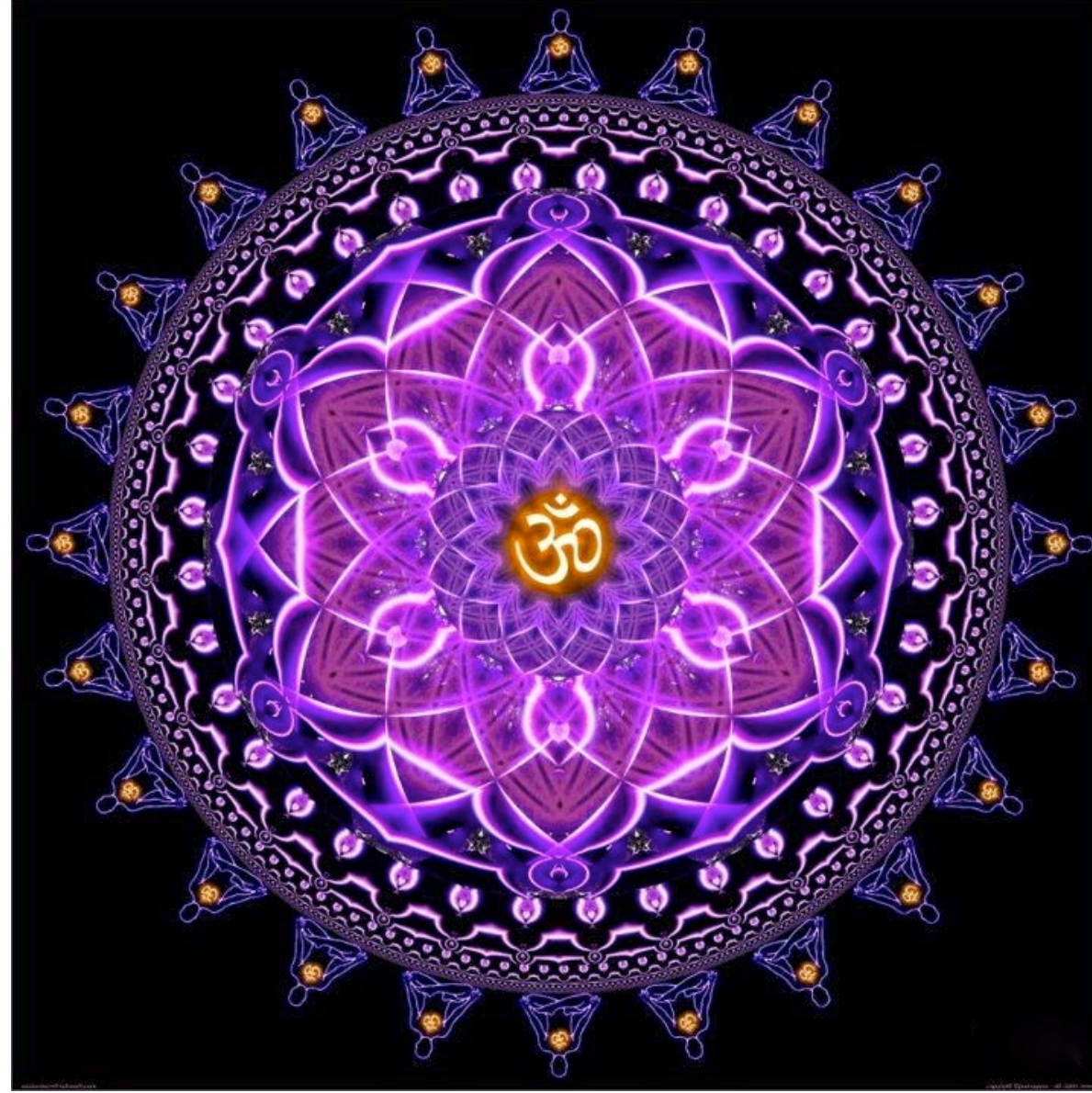


devī māhātmyam

durgā saptaśatī • caṇḍī path



foreword



*sarva maṅgala māṅgalye śive sarvārtha sādhye |
śaraṇya tryambake gauri nārāyaṇi namo'stu te ||*

This dedication has been undertaken as an offering to the lotus feet of Adi Parashakti, the Supreme Being and Divine Mother.

The aim is to share the sacred Durgā Saptaśatī (“Durgā’s 700”), which is also known as the Devī Māhātmyam (“The Greatness of the Goddess”) and the Caṇḍī Pāṭha (“Caṇḍī’s Text”) through the use of romanized Sanskrit with Devī devotees, who may not be proficient in Sanskrit.

The IAST transliteration adopted here is relatively easy to master, especially when simultaneously listened with the Devī Māhātmyam audio recitation.

Special thanks and acknowledgement to Dr. Satya Prakash Choudary for his comprehensive and enlightening article; “The Glory of the Goddess-Devi Mahatmyam”.

Special thanks and acknowledgement to Ajit Krishnan, Mahadeva S Sarma, PVR Narasimha and Rajarshi Nandy. Their invaluable commentaries sourced from various discussion forums have been incorporated in the notes.

Please read the pronunciation guide section first, to familiarise with the basic nuances of Sanskrit vocal sounds.

Some key transliteration characters have been color coded and also long words have breaks indicated to assist pronunciation.

Audio clips (available only with iBook applications) are also included for selected sections to help with vedic pronunciation.

Please visit the link below for Devī Māhātmyam audio files, commentaries, translations and other related resources:



www.facebook.com/devi.mahatmyam



devimahatmyam@me.com

paramaśakti

नमो देव्यै महादेव्यै शिवायै सततं नमः |
नमः प्रकृत्यै भद्रायै नियताः प्रणताः स्म ताम् ॥

The Vedas say that Adi Shakti extends in all and contains all, and She gives birth to the gods and the goddess. Whatever the god one worships, one worships only the Shakti.

The Divine Mother Parashakti is the Eternal Infinite Consciousness, who created and manifested as the universe. All the gods and goddesses are her manifestations.

The Devī Māhātmyam, like the Vedas, is not originated by man. It has no beginning. This scripture can claim to be the repository of mantras.

The Devī Māhātmyam scripture constitutes chapters 81-93 of the Markandeya Purana. It is basically in a form of dialogue between Markandeya and Kroshtuki.

The episodes revealed in Devī Māhātmyam have a deeper inner meaning and metaphorical significance. The esoteric meaning of the battle between the gods and the demons signifies the perceptual conflict between righteous and unrighteous urges; the opposing psychic forces within all of us.

Readers are encouraged to read the many available commentaries on Saptāśatī to understand its highly esoteric significance. The Guptavati by Sri Bhaskaraya is highly recommended.

phalaśruti

sā yācitā ca vijñānaṃ tuṣṭā rddhiṃ prayacchati
DM 12:37

*If pleased, she confers both earthly prosperity as well as
Wisdom.*

The Devī Māhātmyam has the ability to grant the fruits as per the individual aspirations. One who does sadhana with a specific desire in mind achieves whatever he aspires for, while one who does sadhana without any expectation or desire, achieves final liberation.

In the final chapter, it is revealed that the king Suratha was bestowed with prosperity whereas the merchant Samadhi was conferred with divine knowledge; all according to their individual aspirations.

Matsya Purana prescribes recitation of Devī Māhātmyam three times for cure of physical ailments, five times for relief from malefic planets; seven times for relief from impending disaster; nine times for ensuring peace; eleven times for winning royal favours; twelve times for overpowering foes; twenty five times for release from prison; thirty times for cure from cancer; a hundred times for relief from great dishonour; one thousand times to mitigate loss of wealth and for steady prosperity etc.

Kali, Lakshmi and Sarasvati

Kali is one personality of the multiform personality that is Adya. Adya, the original shakti, the foundation of everything, projected from the Absolute, and owes Her very existence to that Absolute. No matter how extensive Her manifestation may become She continually craves reunion with the Absolute, and when she merges again with the Absolute the universe dissolves. Adya, Ma, Great Goddess: call Her what you will, She is Nature itself, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universes.

The job of Nature (in Sanskrit, prakriti) is to give form and limits to consciousness, to finitize awareness. In the human context prakriti represents your 'first action' (pra+ kriti), the choice of action which you naturally, instinctively make when you are confronted by some need to act. This innate 'nature,' which is inborn in each of us, present in our genetic material, controls how we experience the world. Until you have conquered this innate nature, you will have to experience its

many limitations. In Sanskrit we say, svabhavo vijayati iti shauryam-'the true heroism is to conquer your own nature.'

Only the 'nature' of Adya Herself (which is Nature itself) is unlimited; everyone else's 'nature' (and experience) is limited. Though it is almost unlimited (and is almost infinitely less limited than is any human's nature) Kali's 'nature' is predominantly restricted to death and transformation. Kali therefore often appears as one of a triumvirate of goddesses who divide among themselves all substance and action in the cosmos. Kali's companions in this group are Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and prosperity, and Sarasvati, goddess of knowledge.

Lakshmi, who is the embodiment of Maya Shakti, represents the projection of shakti into the adhibhautika, the physical, external world. Sarasvati's shakti, which encourages the progressive transformation of Maya into Chit, manifests in the adhyatmika, the spiritual, which is subtle, ethereal. Kali exists in the astral world, the adhidaivika realm of impressions, perceptions and images that exists where Chit Shakti sports between the physical and spiritual spheres.

courtesy of Robert E. Svoboda (When Kali Comes to Call)

DEVI MĀHĀTMYA

recitation methods

CHARITRAS

1.

Prathama charitra
Chapter 1 - attributed to Maha Kālī
2.

Madhyama charitra
Chapters 2, 3, 4 - attributed to Maha Lakshmi
3.

Uttara charitra
Chapters 5 to 13 - attributed to Maha Sarasvati

The recitation of Devī Māhātmyam’s 13 chapters can be done in several ways:

1. All 13 chapters continuously in one sitting
2. In a span of 3 days

Day 1	Prathama charitra	(chapter 1)
Day 2	Madhyama charitra	(chapters 2, 3, 4)
Day 3	Uttara charitra	(chapters 5 to 13)

3. In a span of 9 days

One reading of the text in 3 days as above, followed by 2 more repetitions in the next 6 days thus completing 3 readings of the text in 9 days

4. In a span of 7 days

- Day 1 - Chapter 1
- Day 2 - Chapters 2 & 3
- Day 3 - Chapter 4
- Day 4 - Chapters 5, 6, 7 & 8
- Day 5 - Chapters 9 & 10
- Day 6 - Chapter 11
- Day 7 - Chapters 12 & 13

5. If there is no time to read all 13 chapters, at least the Madhyama Charitra (chapters 2, 3, 4) can be recited.

Those who cannot do regular parayana can recite Devī Māhātmyam at least on selected auspicious weekdays, lunar days or Navaratri nights.

Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays are considered auspicious for reciting the Devī Māhātmyam.

8th, 9th and 14th lunar days (Ashtami, Navami and Chaturdasi) are considered auspicious.

The 9 days of Sharad Navaratri and Vasanta Navaratri are extremely auspicious times of the year for Devī Māhātmyam.

recitation order

The order of recitation may be different among various traditions. One method uses the following order:

1. śāpoddhāra and utkīlana
2. kavacham
3. argalā stotra
4. kīlakam
5. navakshari japam
6. vedoktaṃrātri sūktam
7. devī māhātmyam
8. navākṣari japam
9. ṛgvedoktaṃ devī sūktam
10. kuñjikā stotram
11. kṣamā prārthanā

The devī sūktam and rātri sūktam also have alternate tantric/pauranic versions apart from the Vedic suktas.

preliminary slokas



Overview

Kavacha, Argala and Keelakam

The three - Kavacha, Argala and Keelakam are considered integral part of the Chandipaath. This is because the sadhana is designed along the guidelines of ShaktA tradition.

The core 700 verses of the main text can awaken Shakti in a very furious and volatile manner which can be too overwhelming or at times dangerous or raw for a seeker to handle.

Hence the need for Kavacha - in order to protect against any disturbance. Another thing that every sincere seeker will face are interaction with various forces whose only aim of existence - their own peculiar dharma - is to break the sadhana at any cost. They can use weaknesses within and without the seeker to serve their own ends.

Then the Argala - bolt - asking for a particular form of intervention of that Shakti in the seeker's life. Remember that our scriptures talk not only of Moksha but also Dharma, Artha and Kama. The untempered Shakti of the Chandipaath can be too daunting unless one has gone beyond ALL desires. But since most are yet to reach that stage, hence the Argala is a process of asking that Powerful and Divine Shakti to work in a specific manner to help the seeker. Shakti - uncontrolled - is like a sword that can cut through anything and everything, good or bad. Dharma/adharma makes little difference. Hence the best Shaktiman is one who is in perfect detachment, at all times, unwavering steadiness of mind and chitta.

Then comes the Keelakam. This is a crucial part of the Tantric process. The seeker is trying to fix the energy of the mantras into a specific areas instead of letting it scatter. All these are necessary at the initial stages of awakening Shakti. Unless the Shakti is tied to a place, it will take a huge amount of time to build up to a reasonable strength. So that is why these three were/are considered crucial part of the Chandipaath.

Rajarshi Nandi

śāpoddhāra & utkīlana

ŚĀPODDHĀRA & UTKĪLANA

mantra to obtain emancipation from all adverse restraints and to obtain key to unlock saptaśati

śāpoddhāra mantra

(repeat mantra 7 times)

oṃ hrīṃ klīṃ śrīṃ krāṃ krīṃ caṇḍikā devyai śāpanā.śānugrahaṃ kuru
kuru svāhā

utkīlana mantra

(repeat mantra 21 times)

oṃ śrīṃ klīṃ hrīṃ saptaśati caṇḍikē utkīlanaṃ kuru kuru svāhā

devī kavacam

KAVACAM

The kavacam, is a prayer acting as an armor effectuating the Divine protection. The kavacam is also used to guard and protect the body and ward off illness.

The body of the sadhaka, is the receptacle for the play of the Divine. It has to be made strong to resist the onslaughts of the forces that stand in the way of spiritual progress.

oṃ asya śrī caṇḍīkavacasya brahmā ṛṣiḥ anuṣṭup chandaḥ cāmuṇḍā
devatā aṅganyā sokta mātaro bījam digbandha devatās tattvam śrī
jagadambā prītyarthe saptaśatī pāṭhāṅgat vena jape viniyogaḥ |

oṃ namaścaṇḍikāyai

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca

oṃ yadguhyaṃ paramaṃ loke sarva rakṣā karam nṛṇāṃ |
yanna kasya cidākhyātaṃ tanme brūhi pitāmaha || 1 ||

brahmovāca

asti guhyatamaṃ vipra sarva bhūtopakāraṃ |
devyāstu kavacaṃ puṇyaṃ tacchṛṇuṣva mahāmune || 2 ||

prathamaṃ śailaputrī ca dvitīyaṃ brahmacārīṇī |
trītiyaṃ candra ghaṇḍeti kūṣmāṇḍeti caturthakam || 3 ||

pañcamaṃ skandamāṇḍeti saṣṭhaṃ kātyāyanīti ca |
saptamaṃ kālārātrīti mahāgaūrīti cāṣṭamaṃ || 4 ||

navamaṃ sidhīdātṛī ca navadurgāḥ prakīrtitāḥ |
uktānyetāni nāmāni brahmaṇaiva mahātmanā || 5 ||

agninā dahyamānastu śatrumadhye gato raṇe |
viṣame durgame caiva bhayārtāḥ śaraṇaṃ gatāḥ || 6 ||

na teṣāṃ jāyate kiṃcidaśubhaṃ raṇasaṃkaṭe |
nāpadaṃ tasya paśyāmi śoka duḥkha bhayaṃ na hī || 7 ||

yaistu bhaktyā smṛtā nūnaṃ teṣāṃ vṛddhiḥ prajāyate |
ye tvāṃ smaranti deveśī rakṣase tānna saṃśayaḥ || 8 ||

pretasaṃsthā tu cāmuṇḍā vārāhī mahiṣāsanā |
aindrī gaja samārūḍhā vaiṣnavī garuḍāsanā || 9 ||

māheśvarī vr̥ṣārūḍhā kaumārī śikhivāhanā |
lakṣmīḥ padmāsanā devī padmahastā haripriyā || 10 ||

śveta rūpadharā devī īśvarī vr̥ṣa vāhanā |
brāhmī haṁsa samārūḍhā sarvābharāṇa bhūṣitā || 11 ||

ityetā mātaraḥ sarvāḥ sarvayoga samanvitāḥ |
nānābharāṇa śobhādhyā nānāratno paśobhitāḥ || 12 ||

dr̥śyante rathamārūḍhā devyaḥ krodhasamākulāḥ |
śaṅkhaṁ cakram gadāṁ śaktiṁ halam ca musalāyudham || 13 ||

kheṭakaṁ tomaraṁ caiva paraśuṁ pāśameva ca |
kuntāyudham trisūlaṁ ca śārṅgamāyudha-muttamam || 14 ||

daityānāṁ dehanāśāya bhaktānāṁ abhayāya ca |
dhārayantyāyu dhānīthaṁ devānāṁ ca hitāya vai || 15 ||

namaste'stu mahāraudre mahāghoraparākrame |
mahābale mahotsāhe mahābhaya vināśini || 16 ||

trāhi māṁ devi duṣprekṣye śatrūṇāṁ bhaya-varddhini |
prācyāṁ rakṣatu māmairī āgneyyāṁ agni devatā || 17 ||

dakṣiṇevatu vārāhī nairṛtyāṁ khaḍgadhārīṇī |
pratīcyāṁ vāruṇī rakṣe dvāyavyāṁ mṛgavāhinī || 18 ||

udīcyāṁ pātu kaumārī aiśānyāṁ sūladhārīṇī |
ūrdhvaṁ brahmāṇi me rakṣed adhastād vaiṣṇavī tathā || 19 ||

evaṁ daśa diśo rakṣeccāmuṇḍā śavavāhanā |
jayā me cāgrataḥ pātu vijayā pātu prṣṭhataḥ || 20 ||

ajitā vāmapārśve tu dakṣiṇe cāparājitā |
śikhā-mudyotinī rakṣed umā mūrdhni vyavasthitā || 21 ||

mālādharī lalāte ca bhruvau rakṣed yaśasvinī |
trinetrā ca bhruvor madhye yamaghanṭā ca nāsike || 22 ||

śaṅkhinī cakṣuṣor madhye śrotrayor-dvāravāsinī |
kapolau kālīkā rakṣet karṇamūle tu śaṅkarī || 23 ||

nāsikāyāṁ sugandhā ca uttarosṭhe ca carcikā |
adhare cāmṛtakalā jihvāyāṁ ca sarasvatī || 24 ||

dantān rakṣatu kaumārī kaṇṭha-deśe tu caṇḍikā |
ghanṭikāṁ citraghanṭā ca mahāmāyā ca tāluke || 25 ||

kāmākṣī cibukaṁ rakṣed vācarṁ me sarvamaṅgalā |
grīvāyāṁ bhadrakālī ca prṣṭhavaṁśe dhanurdharī || 26 ||

nīlagrīvā bahiḥ kaṇṭhe nalikāṁ nalakūbarī |
skandayor khaḍginī rakṣed bāhū me vajradhārīṇī || 27 ||

hastayor daṇḍinī rakṣed ambikā cāṅgulīṣu ca |
nakhāñ-chule-śvarī rakṣet kukṣau rakṣet kuleśvarī || 28 ||

stanau rakṣen mahādevī manaḥ śokavināśinī |
hṛdaye lalitā devī udare śuladhārīṇī || 29 ||

nābhau ca kāmīnī rakṣed guhyaṁ guhyeśvarī tathā |
pūtanā kāmikā meḍhraṁ gudhe mahiṣavāhinī || 30 ||

kaṭyāṁ bhagavatī rakṣej jānunī vindhya-vāsinī |
jaṅghe mahābalā rakṣet sarva-kāma-pradāyinī || 31 ||

gulphayor nārasimhī ca pāda-prṣṭhe tu taijasī |
pādāṅgulīṣu śrī rakṣet pādā-dhastala-vāsinī || 32 ||

nakhān daṁṣṭrakarālī ca keśaṁ-ścaivor-dhvakeśinī |
romakūpeṣu kauberī tvacaṁ vāgīśvarī tathā || 33 ||

rakta-majjāva-sāmāṁsān yasthi medāṁsi pārvatī |
antrāṇi kālārātriśca pittaṁ ca mukuteśvarī || 34 ||

padmāvatī padmakośe kaphe cūḍāmaṇis tathā |
jvālāmuḁhī nakha-jvālā mabhedyā sarva sandhiṣu || 35 ||

śukraṃ brahmāṇi me rakṣec chāyāṃ chatreśvarī tathā |
ahaṃkāraṃ mano buddhiṃ rakṣenme dharmadhārinī || 36

prāṇā pānau tathā vyāna mudānaṃ ca samānakam |
vajra hastā ca me rakṣet prāṇam kalyāṇaśobhanā || 37

rāse rūpe ca gandhe ca śabde sparśe ca yoginī |
sattvaṃ rajas tamaścaiva rakṣen nārāyaṇī sadā || 38

ayū rakṣatu vārāhī dharmam rakṣatu vaiṣṇavī |
yaśaḥ kīrtiṃ ca lakṣmīṃ ca dhanam vidyām ca cakriṇī || 39

gotramindrānī me rakṣet paśūme rakṣa caṇḍike |
putrān rakṣen mahālakṣmīr bhāryāṃ rakṣatu bhairavī || 40

panthānaṃ supathā rakṣen mārgaṃ kṣemakarī tathā |
rājadvāre mahālakṣmīr vijayā sarvataḥ sthitā || 41

rakṣāhīnaṃ tu yat sthānaṃ varjitam kavacena tu |
tat sarvaṃ rakṣa me devi jayantī pāpanāśinī || 42

padamekaṃ na gacchettu yadīc chec chubha mātmanaḥ |
kavacenā vṛto nityam yatra yatraiva gacchati || 43

tatra tatrārtha lābhaśca vijayaḥ sārva kāmikaḥ |
yaṃ yaṃ cintayate kāmam taṃ taṃ prāpnoti niścitam |
paramaiśvarya-matulaṃ prāpsyate bhūtale pumān || 44

nirbhayo jāyate martyaḥ saṅgrāmeṣva-parājitaḥ |
trailokye tu bhavet pūjyaḥ kavacenā-vṛtaḥ pumān || 45

idaṃ tu devyāḥ kavacaṃ devānāmapī durlabham |
yaḥ paṭhet prayato nityam trisandhyaṃ śradhdhayān-vitaḥ || 46

daivī kalā bhavettasya trailokye-ṣvaparaājitaḥ |
jīved varṣaśataṃ sāgra mapamṛtyu vivarjitaḥ || 47

naśyanti vyādhayaḥ sarve lūtā-visphoṭakādayaḥ |
sthāvaraṃ jaṅgamaṃ caiva kṛtimam cāpi yadvīṣam || 48

abhicārāṇi sarvāṇi mantra yantrāṇi bhūtale |
bhūcarāḥ khecarāś caiva jalajāśco padeśikāḥ || 49

sahajā kulajā mālā dākinī śākinī tathā |
antarikṣa carā ghorā dākinyaśca mahābalāḥ || 50

graha bhūta piśācāśca yakṣa gandharva rākṣasāḥ |
brahma rākṣasa vetālāḥ kūṣmāṇḍā bhaira-vādayaḥ || 51

naśyanti darśanāt-tasya kavace hṛdi samsthitē |
mānonnatir bhaved rājñas tejo vṛddhi karam param || 52

yaśasā varddhate so'pi kīrti maṇḍita bhūtale |
japet saptaśatīṃ caṇḍīm kṛtvā tu kavacaṃ purā || 53

yāvad bhūmaṇḍalam dhatte saśaila vana kānanam |
tāvat tiṣṭhati medinyām santatiḥ putra pautrikī || 54

dehānte paramam sthānaṃ yat surairapi durlabham |
prāpnoti puruṣo nityam mahāmāyā prasādataḥ || 55

labhate paramam rūpaṃ śivena saha modate || 56

om

argalā stotram

ARGALA

Argala means a bolt, the knowledge of which is necessary to open the door to the secrets sealed within Saptashati.

oṃ asya śrī argalā stotra mahā mantrasya
viṣṇur ṛṣiḥ anuṣṭup chandaḥ śrī mahālakṣmī devatā
śrī jagadambā prītyarthe saptaśatī pāṭhāṅgat vena jape viniyogaḥ |

oṃ namaścāṇḍikāyai

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca

oṃ

jayantī maṅgalā kālī bhadrakālī kapālinī |
durgā kṣamā śivā dhātrī svāhā svadhā namo'stu te || 1

jaya tvam devi cāmuṇḍe jaya bhūtārtihārini |
jaya sarvagata devi kālārātri namo'stu te || 2

give the form/beauty (rūpa), give the victory, give the fame, kill the enemies

madhu kaiṭābha vidrāvi vidhātṛ varade namaḥ |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 3

mahiṣāsura nirṇāśi bhaktānāṃ sukade namaḥ |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 4

rakta-bījavadhā devi caṇḍamuṇḍa vināśini |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 5

śumbhasyaiva niśumbhasya dhūmrākṣasya ca mardini |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 6

vanditāṅghiyuge devi sarva saubhāgya dāyini |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 7

acintya rūpa carite sarva śatru vināśini |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 8

siddha mantra to obtain bhakti and elimination of sins

natebhyah sarvadā bhaktyā caṇḍike duritāpahe |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 9

stuvad**bh**yo **bh**aktipūrvam tvām caṇḌike vyā**dh**ināśini ||
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 10

caṇḌike satataṃ ye tvāmarcayantīha **bh**aktitaḥ |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 11

dehi saub**h**āgya·mārogyaṃ dehi me paramaṃ suk**h**aṃ |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 12

vid**h**ehi dviṣatām nāśaṃ vid**h**ehi bala·muccakaiḥ |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 13

vid**h**ehi devi kalyāṇaṃ vid**h**ehi paramām śriyaṃ |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 14

surāśura śīroratna nighrṣṭa caraṇe'mbike |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 15

vidyāvantaṃ yaśasvantaṃ lakṣmīvantaṃ janaṃ kuru |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 16

pracaṇḌadaitya darpa**gh**ne caṇḌike praṇatāya me |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 17

catur**bh**uje caturvaktra saṃstute parameśvari |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 18

krṣṇena saṃstute devi śaśvad**bh**aktyā sadāmbike |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 19

himācala sutānā**th**a saṃstute parameśvari |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 20

indrāṇīpati sad**bh**āva pūjite parameśvari |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 21

devi pracaṇḌa dordaṇḌa daitya darpa vināśini |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 22

devi **bh**akta janod·dāma·dattānando·daye'mbike |
rūpaṃ dehi jayaṃ dehi yaśo dehi dviṣo jahi || 23

patnīm manora**m**ām dehi manovṛttānusārīṇīm |
tārīṇīm durga saṃsāra sāgarasya kulod**bh**avām || 24

idaṃ stotraṃ paṭhitvā tu mahāstotraṃ paṭhen naraḥ |
sa tu saptaśatī saṃkhyā varamāpnoti sampadām || 25

om

kīlakam

KĪLAKAM

For the recitation of saptaśatī to be effective, a certain condition had to be fulfilled and this is mentioned in the kīlakam

The sadhaka should offer all of his being unreservedly to the Divine Mother.

oṃ asya śrī kīlaka mantrasya śiva ṛṣiḥ anuṣṭup chandaḥ śrī
mahāsarasvatī devatā śrī jagadambā prītyartham saptaśatī pāṭhāṅgat
vena jape viniyogaḥ |

oṃ namaścāṇḍikāyai

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca

oṃ

viśuddha jñāna dehāya trivedī divya cakṣuṣe |
śreyaḥprāpti nimittāya namaḥ somārdha dhāriṇe || 1

sarva metad vijāniyān mantrāṇām abhi kīlakam |
so'pi kṣemama vāpnoti satataṃ jāpya tatparaḥ || 2

siddhyan tyuc cātanādīni vastūni sakalānyapi |
etena stuvatāṃ devī stotra mātrena siddhyati || 3

na mantrō nauṣadham tatra na kiñcidapi vidyate |
vinā jāpyena siddhyeta sarva muccātanādikam || 4

samagrāṇyapi siddhyanti loka śaikānimamāṃ haraḥ |
kr̥tvā nimantra yāmāsa sarvamevamidaṃ śubham || 5

stotram vai caṇḍikāyāstu tacca guptaṃ cakāra saḥ |
samāptirna ca puṇyasya tām yathā vanni yantraṇām || 6

so'pi kṣema mavāpnoti sarvamevaṃ na saṃśayaḥ |
kr̥ṣṇāyāṃ vā caturdaśyām aṣṭamyām vā samāhitaḥ || 7

dadāti prati grhṇāti nānyathaiśā prasīdati |
itthaṃ rūpeṇa kīlena mahādevena kīlitam || 8

yo niṣkīlāṃ vidhāyaināṃ nityaṃ japati saṃsphuṭam |
sa siddhaḥ sa gaṇaḥ so'pi gandharvo jāyate naraḥ || 9

na caivāp yaṭatastasya bhayaṃ kvāpīha jāyate |
nāpa mṛtyu vaśaṃ yāti mṛto mokṣama vāpnuyāt || 10

jñātvā prārabhya kurvīta na kurvāṇo vinaśyati |
tato jñātvaiva sampannam idaṃ prārabhyate budhaiḥ || 11

saubhāgyādi ca yat kiñcid dṛśyate lalanājane |
tat sarvaṃ tat prasādena tena jāpyamidaṃ śubham || 12

śanaistu japyamāne'smin stotre sampatti ruccakaiḥ |
bhavat yeva samagrāpi tatah prārabhyam eva tat || 13

aiśvaryaṃ yat prasādena saubhāgyārogya sampadaḥ |
śatruhāniḥ paro mokṣaḥ stūyate sā na kiṃ janaiḥ || 14

om

navākṣari nyāsaṃ

NAVĀKṢARI NYĀSAṀ

Once the nyāsaḥ is done, the entire body of the sadhaka belongs to the Divine, and the sadhaka has no claim over it. Perform the japa with this attitude.

oṃ asya śrī navārṇa mantrasya

(alternate: asya śrī chaṇḍī mahālakṣmī mahā mantrasya)

brahma viṣṇu rudrā rṣayaḥ

gāyatrī uṣṇig anuṣṭubhś chandāṃsi

śrī mahākālī mahālakṣmī mahāsarasvatyo devatāḥ

āiṃ bījaṃ

hrīm śaktiḥ

klīm kīlakam

śrī mahākālī mahālakṣmī mahāsarasvatī prītyarthe

navārṇa siddhyarthe jape viniyogaḥ |

vedoktaṃrātri sūktam

VEDOKTAṂRĀTRI SŪKTAM

The 127th sukta in the 10th Mandala of the Rig Veda.

vedoktaṃrātri sūktam audio

rātrī sūktasya kuśika ṛṣiḥ gāyatrī chandaḥ rātridevatā śrī jagadambā
prītyarthe jape viniyogaḥ |

om

rātrī vyakhya dāyatī purutrā devy(a..a)kṣabhiḥ |
viśvā adhi śrīyo”dhita || 1

orvaprā amartyā nivato” devy(u..u)dvataḥ |
jyotiṣā bādhte tamaḥ || 2

niru svasā”ramas krtoṣasam” devyā” yatī |
apedu hāsate tamaḥ || 3

sā no” adya yasyā” vyaṃ ni te yāmanna vikṣmahi |
vrkṣe na vasatiṃ vayah || 4

ni grāmā”so avikṣata ni padvanto ni pakṣiṇaḥ |
niśyenā saści dardhinah || 5

yāvayā” vrky(a..a)ṃvrkaṃ” yavaya stena mū”rmye |
athā” naḥ sutaṛā” bhava || 6

upa mā pepi śattamah kṛṣṇaṃ vyakta masthita |
uṣaṛṇeva yātaya || 7

upa te gā ivākaṃ vrñiṣva duhitar divaḥ |
rātrī stomaṃ na jigyuṣe” || 8

om

navākṣari kara nyāsaḥ

oṃ aiṃ aṅguṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ
oṃ hrīm tarjanībhyāṃ namaḥ
oṃ klīm madhyamābhyāṃ namaḥ
oṃ cāmuṇḍāyai anāmikābhyāṃ namaḥ
oṃ vicce kaniṣṭhikābhyāṃ namaḥ

oṃ aiṃ hrīm klīm cāmuṇḍāyai vicce
karatalakara prṣṭhābhyāṃ astrāya phaṭ
oṃ aiṃ hrīm klīm cāmuṇḍāyai vicce

aṅguṣṭhābhyāṃ :

While saying this phrase, place the nails of your thumbs at the base of your forefingers; slowly trace a line with the thumbnails from the base to the tip of your forefingers.

middle finger

ring finger

pinkie

karatalakara prṣṭhābhyāṃ astrāya phaṭ :

Using the backs of your right fingernails, gently trace lines from the base of the left palm (or some even go to elbow) to the left fingertips. Now do the same, using the left fingertips on the right palm (or elbow). Do 2-3 times, until you've finished saying.

navākṣari hr̥dayādi (anga) nyāsaḥ

oṃ aiṃ hr̥dayāya namaḥ
oṃ hr̥īm śīrase svāhā
oṃ klīm śīkhāyai vaṣaṭ
oṃ cāmuṇḍāyai kavacāya huṃ
oṃ vicce netrāṭayāya vauṣaṭ

oṃ aiṃ hr̥īm klīm cāmuṇḍāyai vicce
karatalakara pr̥ṣṭhābhyāṃ astrāya phaṭ

oṃ aiṃ hr̥īm klīm cāmuṇḍāyai vicce

oṃ bhūrbhuvassuvarom | iti dikbandaḥ

top of head

back of head

clasp upper part of arms just below shoulder with arms crossed at chest

3 eyes

While saying this, trace a clockwise circle around your body using your right hand. Clockwise as if you were looking down on your head from above. As you say "phaṭ", you can clap your hands loudly and decisively either once or 3 times. Clapping loudly is considered to break up any stagnant or negative energy patterns in the room, and to scatter any uncooperative entities in the area. So do this with a firm will and determination that nothing is going to deter you from your purpose of chanting Mother's sacred names. (Astra means a fiery missile, so here we are tracing a subtle circular shield of fire, to protect us while we practice. Phaṭ is a powerful sound of expelling and repelling negative energy.)

While saying this, you can again pass your right hand in a clockwise circle above and around your body. While doing this, you can snap your fingers. Traditionally, one snaps in each of the 10 directions (front, front-right, right, right-back, back, left-back, left, front-left, up, and down). But you can just snap a bunch of times and mentally think of the 10 directions. ("Bhurbhuvassuvarom" contains 4 words, bhuhu, bhuvaha, suvaha, and Om. These are the same 4 words in the first line of Gayatri Mantra. Bhuhu refers to the Earth, bhuvaha refers to the next level or loka, and suvaha refers to a level higher than that, like a heaven or astral realm. By snapping in all directions, we protect ourselves from unnecessary intrusions that might come from any direction

navākṣari dhyānam



dhyānam

khaḍgaṃ cakṛa gadesū cāpa pariḡhāñ chūlaṃ bhuśuṇḍīm śiraḥ
śaṅkhaṃ saṃdadhatīm karai strinayanāṃ sarvāṅga bhūṣāvṛtām |
nīlāśmadyutimāsyā pāda daśakāṃ seve mahākālīkām
yāmastaut svapite harau kamalajo hantuṃ madhum kaiṭabham ||

akṣasrak paraśuṃ gadeṣu kuliśaṃ padmaṃ dhanuḥ kuṇḍikāṃ
daṇḍaṃ śaktim asiṃ ca carma jalajaṃ ghaṇṭāṃ surābhājanam |
śulaṃ pāśa sudarśane ca dadhatīm hastaiḥ prasannānanām
seve sairibha mardinīmiha mahālakṣmīm sarojasthitām ||

ghaṇṭā śūla halāni śaṅkha musale cakṛaṃ dhanuḥ sāyakaṃ
hastābjair dadhatīm ghanānta vilasacchītām śutulya prabhām |
gauṛīdeha samudbhavāṃ trijagatām ādhārabhūtām
mahāpūrvāmatra sarasvatīm anubhaje śumbhādi daityārdinīm ||

navākṣari panchopachāram

laṁ pṛthivyātmikāyai namaḥ | gandhaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on little fingers of both hands - offering gandham. Request Devi to imagine this offering of gandham to fill the size of the earth

haṁ ākāśātmikāyai namaḥ | puṣpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll index fingers on thumbs of both hands - offering puspam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of pusham to fill the size of the entire sky.

yaṁ vāyvātmikāyai namaḥ | dhūpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on index fingers of both hands - offering dhoopam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of dhoopam to fill the size of all the air Vayu (air).

raṁ agnyātmikāyai namaḥ | dīpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on middle fingers of both hands - offering agni. Request Devi to imagine this offering of deepam to fill the all agni.

vaṁ amṛtātmikāyai namaḥ | amṛitaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on ring fingers of both hands - offering naivedyam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of Amrit or Ambrosia.

saṁ sarvātmikāyai namaḥ | samastopacārāṇaṁ samarpayāmi

offer akshatas and namaskar mudra... offering all services in the mind mental and the deities will offer to you.

navākṣari (navārṇa) japam

NAVĀKṢARI (NAVĀRṆA) JAPAM

Surrender self to mantra before japam.

Pray for purification of mind (when mind becomes pure and free from desires it attains liberation).

Visualise deity on crown lotus and self moving into and merging with deity

Visualise oneness with the divine infinite consciousness with self transforming into meditational deity.

ॐ ऐं ह्रीं क्लीं चामुण्डायै विच्चे

om aiṃ hṛīṃ klīm cāmuṇḍāyai vicce

(108 times i.e. 1 mala or multiples of mala)

saptaśatī nyāsam

oṃ prathama madhyamouttara caritrānām
brahma viṣṇu rudrā rishayaḥ

śrī mahākālī mahālakṣmī mahāsarasvatyo devatāḥ

gāyatrī uṣṇig anuṣṭup chandāṃsi

nandā śakambharī bhīmaḥ śaktayaḥ

raktadantikā durgā bhrāmarō bījāni

agni vāyu sūryās tattvāni ṛigyajus sāmavedā dhyānāni

śakala kāmanā siddhaye

śrī mahākālī mahālakṣmī mahāsarasvato devatā prītyarthe jape
viniyogaḥ

saptaśatī kara nyāsaṃ

While reciting slowly trace a line with the thumbnails from the base to the tip of the respective fingers.
Refer navākṣari kara nyāsaṃ for details.

oṃ

khaḍginī śulinī ghorā gadinī cakrīṇī tathā ||
śaṅkhiṇī cāpinī bāṇabhuśuṇḍī pariḡhāyudhā |
aṅguṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ

śulena pāhi no devi pāhi khaḍgena cāmbike |
ghaṇṭā svanena naḥ pāhi cāpajyāniḥ svanena ca ||
tarjanībhyāṃ namaḥ

prācyāṃrakṣa pratīcyāṃ ca caṇḍike rakṣa dakṣiṇe |
bhrāmaṇenātmaśūlasya uttarasyāṃ tathēśvari ||
madhyamābhyāṃ namaḥ

saumyāni yaṇī rūpāṇi trailokye vicaranti te |
yāni cātyarthaghorāṇi tai rakṣāsmāṃs tathā bhuvam ||
anāmikābhyāṃ namaḥ

khaḍga śūla gadādīni yāni cāstrāṇi te'mbike |
karapallavasaṅgīni tairasmān rakṣa sarvataḥ ||
kaniṣṭhikābhyāṃ namaḥ

sarvasvarūpe sarveśe sarvaśaktisamanvite |
bhayebhyastrāhi no devi durge devi namo'stu te ||
karatalakara prṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ

saptaśatī hr̥daya (anga) nyāsaṃ

Refer navākṣari hr̥daya (anga) nyāsaṃ for details.

oṃ

khaḌginī śulinī ghorā gadinī cakrīṇī tathā ||
śaṅkhiṇī cāpinī bāṇabhuśuṇḍī pariḡhāyudhā |
hr̥dayāya namaḥ

śulena pāhi no devi pāhi khaḌgena cāmbike |
ghaṇṭā svanena naḥ pāhi cāpajyāniḥ svanena ca ||
śirase svāhā

prācyāṃ rakṣa pratīcyāṃ ca caṇḌike rakṣa dakṣiṇe |
bhrāmaṇenātmaśūlasya uttarasyāṃ tathēśvari ||
śikhāyai vaṣaṭ

saumyāni yaṇī rūpāṇi trailokye vicaranti te |
yāni cātyarthaghorāṇi tai rakṣāsmāmstathā bhuvam ||
kavacāya huṃ

khaḌgaśūlagadādīni yāni cāstrāṇi te'mbike |
karapallavaśaṅgīni tairasmān rakṣa sarvataḥ ||
netratrayāya vauṣaṭ

sarvasvarūpe sarveśe sarvaśakti samanvite |
bhayebhyastrāhi no devi durge devi namo'stu te ||
astrāya phaṭ

oṃ bhūrbhuvassuvaroṃ | iti dikbandaḥ

saptaśatī dhyānam



I meditate upon the three-eyed Goddess, Durga, the Reliever of Difficulties; the luster of her beautiful body is like lightening. She sits upon the shoulders of a lion and appears very fierce. Many maidens, holding the double-edged sword and shield in their hands are standing at readiness to serve Her.

She holds in Her hands the discus & club, double-edged sword & shield, arrow & bow, noose & the mudra connecting the thumb and pointer fingers extended upwards, indicating the granting of wisdom.

Her intrinsic nature is fore, and upon Her head, She wears the moon as a crown.

dhyanam

om vidyud dāmasamaprabhāṃ mṛgapati skandhasthitāṃ
bhīṣaṇāṃ

kanyābhiḥ karavālakheṭa vilasad-dhastābhirā sevitām |
hastaiścakragadāsi kheṭa viśikhāṃścāpaṃ guṇaṃ
tarjanīm bibhrāṇāmanalātmikāṃ śaśidharāṃ durgāṃ
trinetraṃ bhaje ||

saptaśatī panchopachāram

laṁ pṛthivyātmikāyai namaḥ | gandhaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on little fingers of both hands - offering gandham. Request Devi to imagine this offering of gandham to fill the size of the earth

haṁ ākāśātmikāyai namaḥ | puṣpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll index fingers on thumbs of both hands - offering puspam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of pusham to fill the size of the entire sky.

yaṁ vāyvātmikāyai namaḥ | dhūpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on index fingers of both hands - offering dhoopam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of dhoopam to fill the size of all the air Vayu (air).

raṁ agnyātmikāyai namaḥ | dīpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on middle fingers of both hands - offering agni. Request Devi to imagine this offering of deepam to fill the all agni.

vaṁ amṛtātmikāyai namaḥ | amṛitaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on ring fingers of both hands - offering naivedyam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of Amrit or Ambrosia.

saṁ sarvātmikāyai namaḥ | samastopacārāṇ samarpayāmi

offer akshatas and namaskar mudra... offering all services in the mind mental and the deities will offer to you.

śrī durgā saptaśatī



नमो देव्यै महादेव्यै शिवायै सततं नमः ।

नमः प्रकृत्यै भद्रायै नियताः प्रणताः स्म ताम् ॥

prathama caritrasya



The first episode reveals the Adi Sakti or Moola Prakrti in her dark, deluding aspect (Tamas) that ensnares humankind through the psychological afflictions of ignorance and attachment, through the influence of tamas and rajas.

It teaches us about the nature of reality at the most basic primordial level. Maha Vishnu has to awaken from the state of primal sleep in order overcome the original demoniacal forces, Madhu (tamas) and Kaitabha (rajas). This is possible only through Maha Maya's grace, only if She frees Vishnu from the influence of Yoga Maya, the primordial inactive state predominated by cosmic Tamas.

Overview

Overview and brief description

The Prathama Charitram (i.e. the first portion of the story) consists of one chapter and describes the destruction of Madhu Kaitabha. As mentioned before, Devi is attributed in the form of Maha Kali/Durga in this section.

The Prathama Charitra starts with the description of how Devi Mahatmyam was revealed to King Surata, as explained before in the introductory chapter.

At the end of (previous) Kalpa, the entire universe was submerged in water and Lord Mahavishnu went into Yoga Nidra (Yogic Sleep) state. Two Asuras (Demons) by name Madhu and Kaitabha came into existence from the excreta secreted from Lord Maha Vishnu's ears. They tried to kill Brahma who was seated in the Lotus abdominal portion (Nabhi Kamalam) of Maha Vishnu. Lord Brahma prays Yoga Nidra Devi, the Vishnu Maya to come to his help. At the end of Brahma's prayer, Maya Devi appeared in front of Brahma by emanating from Lord Maha Vishnu's body. Lord Maha Vishnu also wakes up from His Yoga Nidra by this time and fights with Madhu and Kaitabha for one thousand years. At one point of time, Madhu and Kaitabha offered a boon to Lord Maha Vishnu. Lord Maha Vishnu requests the destroyal of both of them as boon. Madhu and Kaitabha accepted to their killing by Lord Maha Vishnu in a place where there is no water. Lord Maha Vishnu immediately kills them by placing them on His lap with His Sudarshana Chakra.

dhyānam



Kali is often depicted in the posture called pratyaldha, with Her left knee advanced and her right leg drawn back. In this position Her left foot can prod Her Shiva into wakefulness. Pratyaldha and its opposite, the alidha stance (right knee advanced, left drawn back) both come from a Sanskrit root which means "lapped up, licked, tongue applied to, eaten."

What She eats, with Her tongue, Her eyes, and Her very pose, is your Ahamkara Shakti, your energy of self. Since the chief expression of shakti in the physical body is prana, the life force, the power which keeps body, mind and spirit functioning together as a living unit, what Kali eats as you worship Her is your prana. Physical life, health and longevity require that ahamkara self-identify strongly with your organism to permit prana to enliven your body. Spiritual health requires ahamkara to relinquish most of this attachment, and Kali is happy to help you actively relinquish it.

The chief carrier of prana in the body is blood, so when you see blood dripping from Kali's tongue you should see that blood as the prana of Her devotees, offered to Her to transmute. What She craves is your blood (your prana) that She may truly bring you to life.

When Kali Comes to Call
Robert E. Svoboda

viniyogaḥ

asya śrī prathama caritrasya | brahmā ṛṣiḥ | mahākālī devatā |
gāyatrī chandaḥ | nandā śaktiḥ | raktadantikā bījam |
agnistattvam | ṛgvedaḥ svarūpam |
śrī mahākālī prītyarthē prathama caritra jape viniyogaḥ |

dhyānam

khaḍgaṃ cakṛa gadesū cāpa pariḥāñ chūlaṃ bhuśuṇḍīm śiraḥ
śaṅkhaṃ saṃdadhatīm karai strinayanām sarvāṅga bhūṣāvṛtām |
nīlāśmadyutimāsyā pāda daśakām seve mahākālīkām
yāmastaut svapite harau kamalajo hantuṃ madhuṃ kaiṭabham ||

om aiṃ śrīmahākālī caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ ||

chapter 1



The slaying of madhukaiṭabha

Madhu and Kaitabha are the two original demoniacal forces of tamas and rajas (also attributed to the base nature of attraction and aversion). They try to overcome the creative and sattvic force (Brahma).

Tantrika Ratri Suktam

DM1: 73 to 87

In this hymn by Brahma, the Devi is extolled as the incomparable Goddess -Vishnu's Yoganidra, the queen of cosmos, the supporter of the worlds, the cause of the sustenance and dissolution alike.

oṃ namaścaṇḍikāyai

oṃ aiṃ māṇḍeya uvāca || 1

sāvarṇiḥ sūryatanayo yo manuḥ kathayate'ṣṭamaḥ |
niśāmaya tadutpattiṃ vistarād gadato mama || 2

mahāmāyā nubhāvena yathā manvantarādhīpaḥ |
sa babhūva mahābhāgaḥ sāvarṇīstanayo raveḥ || 3

svārociṣe'ntare pūrvaṃ caitra·vaṃśa samudbhavaḥ |
suratho nāma rājābhūt samaste kṣiti maṇḍale || 4

tasya pālayataḥ samyak prajāḥ putrāni vaurasān |
babhūvuḥ śatravo bhūpāḥ kolā vidhvaṃsi nastadā || 5

tasya tairabhavad yuddham ati prabala daṇḍinaḥ |
nyūnairapi sa tairyudhe kolāvidhvaṃsi·bhirjitaḥ || 6

tataḥ svapura māyāto nija deśā dhipo'bhavat |
ākṛāntaḥ sa mahā bhāgas taistadā prabalāribhiḥ || 7

amātyair bali·bhir duṣṭair durbalasya durātmabhiḥ |
kośo balaṃ cāpahṛtaṃ tatrāpi svapure tataḥ || 8

tato mṛgayā·vyājena hṛtasvāmyaḥ sa bhūpatiḥ |
ekākī haya māruhya jagāma gahanaṃ vanam || 9

sa tatrasra·mamadrākṣīd dvija varyasya medhasaḥ |
praśān·taśvā padākīrṇaṃ muni śiṣyo paśobhitam || 10

tasthau kañcitsa kālaṃ ca muninā tena satkṛtaḥ |
itaśce taśca vicaraṃs tasmin muni varāśrame || 11

so'cintayat tadā tatra mamatvā kṛṣṭa cetanaḥ |
matpūrvaiḥ pālitaṃ pūrvaṃ mayā hīnaṃ puraṃ hi tat || 12

madbhr̥tyais tairasad vṛttair dharmataḥ pālyate na vā |
na jāne sa pradhānome sūrahastī sadāmadaḥ || 13

mama vairivaśaṃ yātaḥ kān bhogānu palapsyate |
ye mamānugatā nityaṃ prasāda dhana bhojanaiḥ || 14

anuvṛttim dhruvaṃ te'dya kurvan·tyan yamahī·bhr̥tām |
asam·yag·vyaya·śīlaistaiḥ kurvadbhiḥ satataṃ vyayam || 15

sañcitaḥ so'tiduhkhena kṣayaṃ kośo gamiṣyati |
etac·cānyacca satataṃ cintayāmāsa pārthivaḥ || 16

tatra viprāśra·mābhyāse vaiśyamekaṃ dadarśa saḥ |
sa prṣṭastena kastvaṃ bho hetu·ścāgamane'tra kaḥ || 17

saśoka iva kasmāttvaṃ durmanā iva lakṣyase |
ityākārṇya vacastasya bhūpateḥ praṇayoditam || 18

pratyuvāca sa taṃ vaiśyaḥ praśrayā·vanato nṛpam || 19

vaiśya uvāca || 20

samādhir nāma vaiśyo'ha·mutpanno dhanināṃ kule || 21

putradārair nirastaśca dhana lobhāda sādhubhiḥ |
vihīnaśca dhanair dārāiḥ putrairādāya me dhanam || 22

vanama·bhyāgato duḥkhī niras·taścāpta bandhubhiḥ |
so'haṃ navedmi putrāṇāṃ kuśalā·kuśalāt mikām || 23

pravṛttim svajanānāṃ ca dārāṇāṃ cātra saṃsthitaḥ |
kiṃ nu teṣāṃ gr̥he kṣema makṣemaṃ kiṃ nu sāmpratam || 24

kathaṃ te kiṃ nu sadvṛttā durvṛttaḥ kiṃ nu me sutāḥ || 25

rājovāca || 26

yairnirasto bhavāṃllubdhaiḥ putradārādibhir dhanaiḥ || 27

teṣu kiṃ bhavataḥ sneham anubadhnāti mānasam || 28

vaiśya uvāca || 29

evam etad yathā prāha bhavān asmad-gataṃ vacaḥ || 30

kiṃ karomi nabadhnāti mama niṣthuratām manah |
yaiḥ santyajya pitṛsnehaṃ dhana lubdhair nirākṛtaḥ || 31

patis-svajana-hārdaṃ ca hārdi teṣveva me manah |
ki me tannābhi jānāmi jānannapi mahāmate || 32

yat prema pravaṇaṃ cittam viguṇeṣvapi bandhuṣu |
teṣāṃ kṛte me niḥśvāso daurmanasyaṃ ca jāyate || 33

karomi kiṃ yanna manaste-ṣvapṛtiṣu niṣthuram || 34

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca || 35

tatastau sahitaṃ vipra taṃ muniṃ samupasthitau || 36

samādhināma vaiśyo'sau sa ca pāṛthiva sattamaḥ |
kṛtvā tu tau yathānyāyāṃ yathārhaṃ tena saṃvidam || 37

upaviṣṭau kathāḥ kāścic cakratur-vaiśya pāṛthivau || 38

rājovāca || 39

bhagavaṃ stvāmahaṃ praṣṭumicchāṃ yekaṃ vadasva tat || 40

duḥkhāya yanme manasaḥ svacit tāyat tatāṃ vinā |
mamatvaṃ gata-rājyasya rājyāṅgeṣva-khileṣvapi || 41

jānato'pi yathā jñasya kimetan muni sattama |
ayaṃ ca nikṛtaḥ putrair dārair bhṛtyais-tathoj jhitaḥ || 42

svajanena ca santyaktas teṣu hārdī tathāpyati |
evameṣa tathāhaṃ ca dvāvap yatyanta duḥkhitaṃ || 43

drṣṭa doṣe'pi viśaye mamatvā kṛṣṭa mānasau |
tat kimetan mahā bhāga yanmoho jñāni norapi || 44

mamāsyā ca bhavat yeṣā vivekāndhasya mūḍhatā || 45

rṣiruvāca || 46

jñānamasti samastasya jantorviśaya gocare || 47

viśayaśca mahābhāga yāti caivaṃ pṛthak pṛthak |
divāndhāḥ prāṇinaḥ kecid rātrāvandhās tathāpare || 48

keciddivā tathā rātrau prāṇinas-tulya-drṣṭayaḥ |
jñānino manujāḥ satyaṃ kiṃ tu te nahi kevalam || 49

yato hi jñāninaḥ sarve paśu pakṣi mṛgādayaḥ |
jñānaṃ ca tanmanuṣyāṇāṃ yatteṣāṃ mṛgapakṣiṇām || 50

manuṣyāṇāṃ ca yatteṣāṃ tulya manyat tathobhayoh |
jñāne'pi sati paśyaitān pataṅgāñchā vacaṅcuṣu || 51

kaṇamokṣā dr̥tān mohāt pīḍyamānānapi kṣudhā |
mānuṣā manu javyāghra sābhilāṣāḥ sutān prati || 52

lobhāt pratyupakārāya nanvetān kiṃ na paśyasi |
tathāpi mamatāvartte mohagarte nipātitaḥ || 53

mahāmāyā prabhāveṇa saṃsāra sthiti kāriṇā |
tannātra vismayaḥ kāryo yoganidrā jagat pateḥ || 54

mahāmāyā hareścaiṣā tayā saṃmohyate jagat |
jñānināmapi cetāṃsi devī bhagavatī hi sā || 55

balādākr̥ṣya mohāya mahāmāyā prayacchati |
tayā visṛjate viśvaṃ jagadetac carācaram || 56

saiṣā prasannā varadā nr̥ṇāṃ bhavati muktaye |
sā vidyā paramā mukter hetu bhūtā sanātānī || 57

saṁsāra bandha hetuśca saiva sarveśvareśvarī || 58

rājavāca || 59

bhagavan kā hi sā devī mahāmāyeti yāṁ bhavān || 60

bravīti kathamutpannā sā karmāsyāśca kiṁ dvija |
yat prabhāvā ca sā devī yat svarūpā yadudbhavā || 61

tatsarvaṁ śrotumicchāmi tvatto brahma vidāṁ vara || 62

ṛṣiruvāca || 63

nityaiva sā jaganmūrtis tayā sarvaṁidaṁ tatam || 64

tathāpi tat samutpattir bahudhā śrūyatāṁ mama |
devānāṁ kārya sidhdyartha-māvirbhavati sā yadā || 65

utpanneti tadā loke sā nityāpyabhi dhīyate |
yoganidrāṁ yadā viṣṇur jagat yekārṇa vīkṛte || 66

āstīrya śeṣa-mabhajat kalpānte bhagavān prabhuh |
tadā dvāvasurau ghorau vikhyātau madhu kaiṭabhau || 67

viṣṇu-karṇamalod bhūtau hantum brahmāṇamudyatau |
sa nābhi kamale viṣṇoḥ sthito brahmā prajāpatiḥ || 68

drṣṭvā tāvasurau cograu prasuptaṁ ca janārdanam |
tuṣṭāva yoganidrāṁ tāmekāgra hr̥daya sthitaḥ || 69

vibodhanār-thāya harer hari netra kṛtālayām |

viśveśvarīm jagad dhātṛīm sthiti saṁhārakārīṇīm || 70

nidrāṁ bhagavatīm viṣṇoratulām tejasaḥ prabhuh || 71

bramhovāca || 72

tvam svāhā tvam svadhā tvam hi vaṣaṭkāraḥ svarātmikā || 73

sudhā tvamakṣare nitye tridhā mātṛātmikā sthitā |
ardhamātrā sthitā nityā yānuccāryā viśeṣataḥ || 74

tvameva sandhyā sāvitṛī tvam devi jananī parā |
tvayai taddhāryate viśvaṁ tvayaitat sṛjyate jagat || 75

tvayaitat pālyate devi tvamatsyante ca sarvadā |
visṛṣṭau sṛṣṭirūpā tvam sthiti rūpā ca pālāne || 76

tathā saṁhṛti-rūpānte jagato'sya jaganmaye |
mahāvidyā mahāmāyā mahāmedhā mahāsmṛtiḥ || 77

mahāmohā ca bhavatī mahādevī mahāsurī |
prakṛtistvaṁ ca sarvasya guṇa traya vibhāvinī || 78

kālarātrir mahārātrir moha-rātriśca dāruṇā |
tvam śrīś tvam īśvarī tvam hr̥īś tvam buddhir bodha-lakṣṇaṇā || 79

lajjā puṣṭis tathā tuṣṭis tvam śāntiḥ kṣāntireva ca |
khaḍginī śulinī ghorā gadinī cakriṇī tathā || 80

śāṅkhiṇī cāpinī bāṇa-bhuśuṇḍī pariḥāyudhā |
saumyā saumya-tarāśeṣa saumye-bhyastvati-sundarī || 81

parā parāṇāṁ paramā tvameva parameśvarī |
yacca kiṁcit-kvacidvastu sada-sadvā-khilātmike || 82

tasya sarvasya yā śaktiḥ sā tvam kiṁ stūyase tadā |
yayā tvayā jagat-sraṣṭā jagat pātyatti yo jagat || 83

so'pi nidrā vaśaṁ nītaḥ kastvāṁ stotu-miheśvaraḥ |
viṣṇuḥ śārīra grahaṇa mahamīśāna eva ca || 84

kāritāste yato'tastvām kaḥ stotuṁ śaktimān bhavet |
sā tvamitthaṁ prabhāvaiḥ svair-udārair-devi saṁstutā || 85

mohayaitau durādhārṣā vasurau madhu-kaiṭabhau |
prabodhaṁ ca jagat-svāmī nīyatāmacyuto laghu || 86

bodhaśca kriya-tāmasya hantu-metau mahāsurau || 87

ṛṣiruvāca || 88

evam stutā tadā devī tāmāsī tatra vedhasā || 89

viṣṇoḥ prabo-dhanārthāya nihantum madhu-kaiṭabhau |
netrāsya nāsikā bāhu hṛdayebhyas tathorasaḥ || 90

nirgamyā darśane tasthau brahmaṇo'vyakta janmanaḥ |
uttasthau ca jagannāthas tayā mukto janārdanaḥ || 91

ekārṇave'hiśayanāt tataḥ sa dadṛśe catau |
madhu-kaiṭabhau durātmānā vativīrya-parākramau || 92

krodha-raktek-śaṇā-vattum brahmāṇaṁ janitodyamau |
samuthāya tatas-tābhyāṁ yuyudhe bhagavān hariḥ || 93

pañca varṣa sahasrāṇi bāhu praharaṇo vibhuḥ |
tāvap yati balon mattau mahāmāyā vimohitau || 94

uktavantau varo'smatto vriyatāmiti keśavam || 95

śrībhagavān uvāca || 96

bhāvetāmadya me tuṣṭau mama vadhya vubhāvapi || 97

kimanyena vareṇātra etāvadhi vṛtaṁ mama || 98

ṛṣiruvāca || 99

vañci-tābhyāmiti tadā sarva māpo mayam jagat || 100

vilokya tābhyāṁ gadito bhagavān kamalekṣaṇaḥ |
āvāṁ jahi na yatr orvī salilena pariplutā || 101

ṛṣiruvāca || 102

tathet yuktivā bhagavatā śaṅkha cakṛa gadā bhṛtā |
kṛtvā cakreṇa vai chinne jaghane śirasī tayoh || 103

evameṣā samutpannā brahmaṇā samstutā svayam |
prabhāvamasyā devyāstu bhūyaḥ śṛṇu vadāmi te || 104

| aiṁ oṁ |

madhyama caritrasya



Overview

Overview of Madhama Charitram

The Madhyama Charitram (i.e. the middle part of story) consists of 3 chapters viz. Mahishasura Sainya Vadham, Mahishasura Vadham and Devi Stuti. As mentioned before, this section attributes Maha Maya in the form of Maha Lakshmi.

Chapter 2 Mahisharura Sainya Vadham

Once upon a time, Mahishasura was ruling the Asuras (Demons) and Indra was ruling the Devas. A war breaks out between the two and Mahishasura assumes the post of Devendra after defeating the Devas. He also starts performing the functions of Sun, Indra, Agni, Vayu, Varuna etc.

The Devas assemble in front of Lord Brahma, Lord Maha Vishnu and Lord Shiva who get very angry after listening to their plight. A resplendent Devi is born from the Tejas (luster) of the three Lords. The Lords and other Devas then bestow their divine strength and weapons to the Devi.

The Devi then fights with Mahishasura's army and destroys them completely.

Chapter 3 Mahisharura Vadham

The Devi then fights with the important lieutenants of Mahishasura such as Chikshura, Chamara, Karala, Uddata, Bashkala, Ugrasya, Ugravirya, Bidala and kills all of them. Mahishasura comes and fights with Devi himself upon seeing the defeat and killing of his large army. Devi fights with him for a while and then kills him with Shula by standing his neck.

Chapter 4 Devi Stuti

The Devas become very happy and pleased with the destroyal of Mahishasura's army and Mahishasura's slaying by Devi. They all praise and pray Devi as the the embodiment of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as well as Lakshmi and Parvati.

Devi becomes pleased with Devas' praise and offers a boon. Devas request that She must come to their rescue from troubles whenever they think of Her. Devi grants their wish and disappears.

The following is the Dhyana Sloka for Madhyama Charitra where Maha Maya Devi is worshipped as Maha Lakshmi.

dhyānam



vinīyogaḥ

asya śrī madhyama caritrasya viṣṇur ṛṣiḥ |
śrī mahālakṣmī devatā | uṣṇik chandaḥ |
śakambharī śaktiḥ | durgā bījaṃ | vāyustattvaṃ |
yajur vedaḥ svarūpaṃ |
śrī mahālakṣmī prītyartham madhyama caritra jape vinīyogaḥ |

dhyānam

oṃ

akṣasrak paraśuṃ gadeṣu kuliśaṃ padmaṃ dhanuḥ kuṇḍikāṃ
daṇḍaṃ śaktim asiṃ ca carma jalajaṃ ghaṇṭāṃ surābhājanam |
śulaṃ pāśa sudarśane ca dadhatīm hastaiḥ prasannānanām
seve sairibha mardinīmiha mahālakṣmīm sarojasthitām ||

oṃ hrīm śrīmahālakṣmī caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ |

chapter 2



anyeṣāṃ caiva devānāṃ śakrādīnāṃ śarīrataḥ |
nirgataṃ sumahattejastaccaikyam samagacchata || 11

And from the bodies of the other gods, Indra and the others.
Came forth a great fiery splendour, and it became unified in one place.

oṃ namaścāṇḍikāyai

oṃ hrīm ṛṣi ruvāca || 1

devā sura·mabhūd·yuddhaṃ pūrṇa·mabda·śataṃ purā |
mahiṣe'surāṇā·madhiṣe devānāṃ ca purandare || 2

tatrā surair mahāvīryair deva·sainyaṃ parājitam |
jītvā ca sakalān devān indro'bhūn mahiṣāsuraḥ || 3

tataḥ parājitā devāḥ padma·yonim prajāpatim |
puras·kṛtya gatās tatra yatreśa·garuḍa·dhvajau || 4

yathā vṛttaṃ tayostadvan mahiṣāsura ceṣṭitam |
tridaśāḥ kathayāmāsur devābhi bhava·vistaram || 5

sūryen·drāgnya·nilen·dūnāṃ yamasya varuṇasya ca |
anyeṣāṃ cādhikārān sa svayamevā dhitiṣṭhati || 6

svargān·nirākṛtāḥ sarve tena devagaṇā bhuvi |
vicaranti yathā martyā mahiṣeṇa durātmanā || 7

etadvaḥ kathitam sarva·mamarāri·viceṣṭitam |
śaraṇaṃ vaḥ prapannāḥ smo vadhā tasya vicintyatām || 8

itthaṃ niśamya devānāṃ vacāṃsi madhusūdanaḥ |
cakāra kopaṃ śambhuśca bhrukuṭī·kuṭī·lānanau || 9

tato'ti·kopa pūrṇasya cakriṇo vadanāt tataḥ |
niścakrāma mahattejo brahmaṇaḥ śaṅkarasya ca || 10

anyeṣāṃ caiva devānāṃ śakrādīnāṃ śarīrataḥ |
nirgataṃ sumahat·tejas taccaikyam samagacchata || 11

aṭīva tejaṣaḥ kūṭam jvalan·tamiva parvatam |
dadṛśuste surās·tatra jvālā vyāpta digantaram || 12

atulaṃ tatra tattejaḥ sarva deva śarīraṃ |
ekasthaṃ tada bhūnnārī vyāpta loka trayam tviṣā || 13

yada bhūcchām bhavaṃ tejas tenā jāyata tanmukhaṃ |
yāmyena cābhavan keśā bāhavo viṣṇu tejasā || 14

saumyena stanayor yugmaṃ madhyaṃ caindreṇa cābhavat |
vāruṇena ca jaṅghorū nitambas tejasā bhuvah || 15

brahmaṇas tejasā pādaḥ tadaṅ gulyo' rka tejasā |
vasūnāṃ ca karāṅ gulyaḥ kaubereṇa ca nāsikā || 16

tasyāstu dantāḥ sambhūtāḥ prajā patyena tejasā |
nayana tritayam jāiṇe tathā pāvaka tejasā || 17

bhruvau ca san dhyayo stejaḥ śravaṇā vanilasya ca |
anyeṣāṃ caiva devānāṃ sambhavas tejasāṃ śivā || 18

tataḥ samasta devānāṃ tejo rāśi samud bhavām |
tāṃ vilokya mudam prāpu ramarā mahiṣārditāḥ || 19

śulaṃ śulād viniṣkrṣya dadau tasyai pinākadhr̥k |
cakram ca dattavān kr̥ṣṇaḥ samut pādya sva cakrataḥ || 20

śaṅkhaṃ ca varuṇaḥ śaktiṃ dadau tasyai hutāśanaḥ |
māruto dattavāṃ ścāpaṃ bāṇapūrṇe tathesudhī || 21

vajra mindraḥ samut pādya kuliśāda marādhīpaḥ |
dadau tasyai sahasrākṣo ghaṇṭā mairā vatād gajāṭ || 22

kāla daṇḍā dyamo daṇḍaṃ pāśaṃ cāmbupatir dadau |
prajāpati ścā kṣamālāṃ dadau brahmā kamaṇḍalum || 23

samasta roma kupeṣu nijarāsmīn divākaraḥ |
kālaśca dattavān khaḍgaṃ tasyā ścarma ca nirmalam || 24

kṣīroda ścāmalaṃ hāra majare ca tathāmbare |
cūḍāmaṇim tathā divyaṃ kuṇḍale kaṭakāni ca || 25

ardha candraṃ tathā śubhraṃ keyūrān sarva bāhuṣu |
nūpurau vimalau tadvad graiveyaka manuttamam || 26

aṅgulīyaka ratnāni samastā svaṅgulīṣu ca |
viśvakarmā dadau tasyai paraśum cātinirmalam || 27

astrāṇya neka rūpaṇi tathā bhedyam ca daṃśanam |
amlāna paṅkajāṃ mālāṃ śiras yurasi cāparām || 28

ada dajjala dhis tasyai paṅkajam cātiśobhanam |
himavān vāhanaṃ siṃhaṃ ratnāni vividhāni ca || 29

dadā vaśūnyaṃ surayā pānapātraṃ dhanā dhipaḥ |
śeṣaśca sarva nāgeśo mahāmaṇi vidbhūṣitam || 30

nāgahāraṃ dadau tasyai dhatte yaḥ pṛthivīmimām |
anyairapi surair devī bhūṣanair āyudhais tathā || 31

sammānitā nanādoccaiḥ sāttahāsaṃ muhur muhuḥ |
tasyā nādena ghoreṇa kṛtsnamā pūritam nabhaḥ || 32

amā yatāti mahatā prati śabdo mahāna bhūt |
cukṣubhuḥ sakalā lokāḥ samudrāśca cakampire || 33

cacāla vasudhā celuḥ sakalāśca mahīdharāḥ |
jayeti devā śca mudā tāmūcuḥ siṃha vāhinīm || 34

tuṣṭuvur munaya ścaināṃ bhakti namrātma mūrtayaḥ |
dr̥ṣṭvā samastaṃ samkṣubdham trailokya mamarārayaḥ || 35

samnad dhākhila sainyāste samut tasthu rudāyudhāḥ |
āḥ kimetaditi krodhā dābhāṣya mahiṣāsurāḥ || 36

abhya dhāvata taṃ śabdam aśeṣair asurair vṛtaḥ |
sadadarśa tato devīm vyāpta loka trayam tviṣā || 37

pādākṛāntyā natabhuvam kirīṭol likhitāmbarām |
kṣobhitā śeṣa pātālāṃ dhanur jyāniḥ svanena tām || 38

diśo **b**huja sahas**re**ṇa samantād vyāpya saṁst**h**itām |
 tataḥ pravavṛte yud**d**haṁ tayā devyā suradv**i**ṣām || 39

 śastrās·trair bahu**d**hā muktair ādīpita·digantaram |
 mahi**ṣ**āsurā·senānī·ścik·**ṣ**urā**k**hyo mahāsurāḥ || 40

 yuyud**h**e cāmara·ścān·yaiś catur**a**ṅga balānvitah |
 rathānāma yutaiḥ **ṣ**ad**b**hir·udagrā**k**hyo mahāsurāḥ || 41

 ayud**h**yatā·yutānām ca sahas**re**ṇa mahāhanuḥ |
 pañcā śad**b**hiśca niyutair asilomā mahāsurāḥ || 42

 ayutānām śataiḥ śa**ḍ**bhir bā**ṣ**kalo yuyud**h**e ra**ṇ**e |
 gajavāji sahasraug**h**air anekaiḥ parivāritah || 43

 vṛto rathānām koṭyā ca yud**h**e tasminna·yud**h**yata |
 biḌā·lā**k**hyo'yutānām ca pañcā·śad**b**hi rathā·yutaiḥ || 44

 yuyud**h**e saṁyuge tatra rathānām parivāritah |
 anye ca tatrā yutaśo rathanāga·hayair vṛtāḥ || 45

 yuyud**h**uḥ saṁyuge devyā saha tatra mahāsurāḥ |
 koṭi koṭi sahasraistu rathānām dantinām tathā || 46

 hayānām ca vṛto yud**h**e tatrā **b**hūn mahi**ṣ**āsurāḥ |
 tomarair **b**hindi·pālaiś ca śakti**b**hir musalais tathā || 47

 yuyud**h**uḥ saṁyuge devyā **k**haḌgaiḥ paraśu paṭṭisaiḥ |
 kecicca cik**ṣ**ipuḥ śaktiḥ kecit pāśaṁ·stat**h**āpare || 48

 devīm **k**haḌga·prahā·raistu te tāṁ hantum pracakramuḥ |
 sāpi devī tatastāni śastrā**ṇ**ya strā**ṇ**i caṇ**d**ikā || 49

 īla·yaiva pracic**h**eda nija śastrā stravar**ṣ**iṇī |
 anāya·stānanā devī stūyamānā surar**ṣ**i**b**hiḥ || 50

 mumocāsura dehe**ṣ**u śastrā**ṇ**ya strā**ṇ**i ceśvarī |
 so'pi krud**h**o **d**hutasato devyā vāhanakesarī || 51

cacārāsura sainya**ṣ**u vane**ṣ**viva hutāśanaḥ |
 niḥśvāsān mumuce yāṁśca yud**h**yamānā ra**ṇ**e'mbikā || 52

 ta eva sadyaḥ samb**h**ūtā gaṇāḥ śata·sahasraśaḥ |
 yuyud**h**uste paraśub**h**ir **b**hindipālāsi paṭṭisaiḥ || 53

 nāśayanto'suragaṇān devī·śaktyupa br̥ṁhitāḥ |
 avādayanta paṭahān gaṇāḥ śaṅ**k**hām·stat**h**āpare || 54

 mṛdaṅgām·śca tathai·vānye tasmin yud**h**a·mahotsave |
 tato devī triśulena gadayā śakti·vr̥**ṣ**ti**b**hiḥ || 55

khaḌgā·di**b**hiśca śataśo nija**g**hāna mahāsurān |
 pātayāmāsa caivānyān **g**haṇ**t**ā svana·vimohitān || 56

 asurān **b**huvi pāśena bad**d**hvā cānyāna·kar**ṣ**ayat |
 kecid dvid**h**ā kṛtās·tik**ṣ**naiḥ **k**haḌga·pātai·stat**h**āpare || 57

 vipothitā nipātena gadayā **b**huvi śerate |
 vemuśca kecid·rud**h**iram musalena **b**hṛśam hatāḥ || 58

 kecin·nipatitā **b**hūmau **b**hinnāḥ śulena vak**ṣ**asi |
 nirantarāḥ śaraug**h**eṇa kṛtāḥ kecid·raṇājire || 59

 śyenānu kāriṇaḥ prāṇān mumucus·trida·sārdanāḥ |
 ke**ṣ**āṁcid bāhavaś·**c**hinnāś·**c**hinna·grīvās tathāpare || 60

 śirāṁsi peturanye**ṣ**ā·manyē mad**h**ye vidāritāḥ |
 vic**h**inna jaṅ**g**hās·tvapare peturur·vyāṁ mahāsurāḥ || 61

 ekabāḥ·vak**ṣ**i·caraṇāḥ kecid devyā dvid**h**ākṛtāḥ |
chinne'pi cānye śirasi patitāḥ punarut·**t**hitāḥ || 62

 kaband**h**ā yuyud**h**ur devyā gr̥hīta·paramā·yud**h**āḥ |
 nanṛtu·ścāpare tatra yud**h**e tūrya layā·śritāḥ || 63

 kaband**h**āś·**c**hinna śirasaḥ **k**haḌga śaktyr̥**ṣ**ti pāṇayaḥ |
 ti**ṣ**ṭha ti**ṣ**ṭheti **b**hā**ṣ**anto devīmanyē mahāsurāḥ || 64

pāitai ratha·nāgāśvair·asuraisca vasundharā |
agamyā sābhavat tatra yatrābhūt sa mahāraṇaḥ || 65

śoṇi·taughā mahānadyaḥ sadyas tatra prasusruvuḥ |
madhye cāsura sainyasya vāraṇāsura vājinām || 66

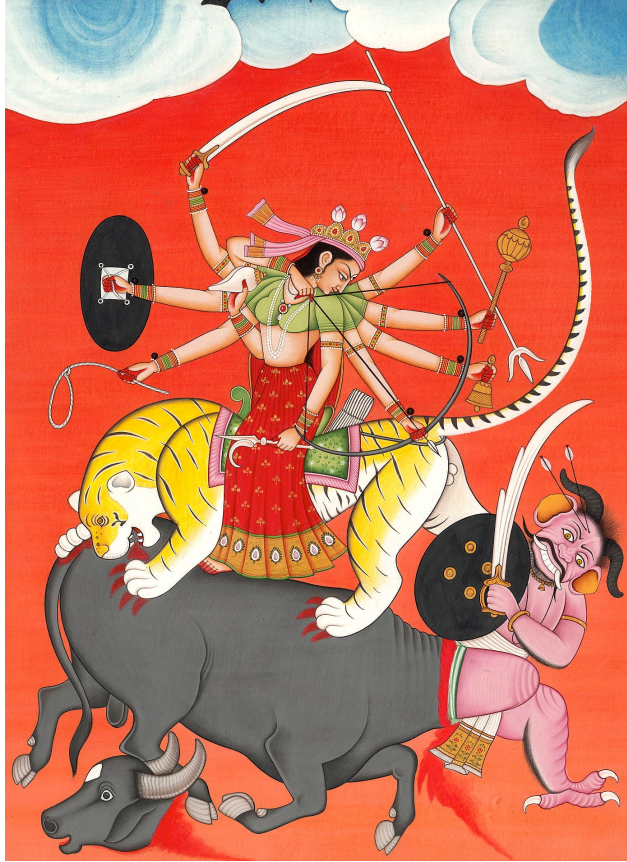
kṣaṇena tanmahā·sainyam asurāṇām tathāmbikā |
ninye kṣayaṃ yathā vahnis trṇadāru mahācayam || 67

sa ca siṃho mahānāda mutsrjan dhuta·kesaraḥ |
śarīre·bhyo'marārṇā·masūniva vicinvati || 68

devyā gaṇaisca taistatra kṛtaṃ yuddhaṃ mahāsuraiḥ |
yathaiṣām tutuṣur devāḥ puṣpa vrṣṭimuco divi || 69

om

chapter 3



The slaying of mahiṣasuraḥ

ardhaniṣkrānta evāsau yudhyamāno mahāsurah |
tayā mahāsinā devyā śiraśchittvā nipātitaḥ || 42

That great asura, who had come forth halfway fighting, was felled by the Goddess, who cut off his head with a great sword.

dhyānam

om udyad bhānu sahasra kāntim aruṇa.kṣaumāṃ śiromālikāṃ
raktā.lipta.payodharāṃ japavaṭīm vidyā.mabhītiṃ varam |
hastābjair.dadhatīm trinetra visalad vaktrā.ravinda.śriyaṃ
devīm badha.himāṃśu ratna mukuṭāṃ vande.ravinda.sthitām ||

om aiṃ hrīṃ klīm śankarī caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

The radiant body of the Mother of the Universe has a magnificence of a thousand rising suns. She is draped in a saree of red silk. Around her neck is a garland of red skulls. Her two breasts have been colored with red sandal paste. In her four lotus-like hands She holds a rosary and shows the mudras of Knowledge, Fearlessness and Granting of Boons. Her three eyes are shining and Her bud-like mouth is extremely beautiful. Upon Her head sits a crown of jewels in which the moon is situated, and She is resting upon a lotus seat.
With unlimited devotion I bow to this Goddess.

om namaścāṇḍikāyai

om ṛṣi ruvāca || 1

nihanyamānaṃ tat sainya·mavalokya mahāsurah |
senā·nīścik·ṣurah kopā·dyayau yoddhu·mathāmbikām || 2

sa devīm śaravarṣeṇa vavarṣa samare'surah |
yathā meru gireḥ śrṅgaṃ toya·varṣeṇa toyadaḥ || 3

tasyac chittvā tato devī līlayaiva śarotkarān |
jaghāna turagān·bāṇair·yantāraṃ caiva vājinām || 4

ciccheda ca dhanuḥ sadyo dhvajaṃ cāti·samuc·chritam |
vivyadha caiva gātreṣu chinna·dhanvāna·māsugaiḥ || 5

saccinna·dhanvā viratho hatāśvo hata·sārathiḥ |
abhya·dhāvata tāṃ devīm khaḍga carma dharo'surah || 6

siṃha māhatya khaḍgena tīkṣṇa·dhāreṇa mūrdhani |
ājaghāna bhuje savye devī mapyati vegavān || 7

tasyāḥ khaḍgo bhujaṃ prāpya paphāla nṛpanandana |
tato jagṛāha sūlaṃ sa kopā daruṇa locanaḥ || 8

cikṣepa ca tataṣ tattu bhadra kālyāṃ mahāsurah |
jājvalya·mānaṃ tejobhī ravibimba mivāmbarāt || 9

drṣṭvā tadāpa·tacchūlaṃ devī sūlam amuñcata |
tacchūlaṃ śatadhā tena nītaṃ sa ca mahāsurah || 10

hate tasmin mahāvīrye mahiṣasya camūpatau |
ājagāma gajā rūḍhas cāmarastri daśārdanaḥ || 11

so'pi śaktiṃ mumocātha devyāstā·mambikā drutam |
humkārā·bhihatāṃ bhūmau pātayāmāsa niṣprabhām || 12

bhagnāṃ śaktiṃ nipatitāṃ drṣṭvā krodha·samanvitaḥ |
cikṣepa cāmarah sūlaṃ bāṇais·tadapi sācchinat || 13

tataḥ siṃhaḥ samutpatya gaja·kumbhān·tare sthitaḥ |
bāhu·yuddhena yuyudhe tenoc cais·trida·sāriṇā || 14

yuddhya·mānau tatastau tu tasmān nāgān mahīm gatau |
yuyuddhāte'tisaṃ·rabdhau prahā·rairati·dāruṇaiḥ || 15

tato vegāt khamut·patya nipatya ca mṛgāriṇā |
kara·prahāreṇa śiraś cāmarasya pṛthak kṛtam || 16

udagraśca raṇe devyā śilā·vṛksā dibhirhataḥ |
dantamuṣṭi talaiś·caiva karālaśca nipātitaḥ || 17

devī kruddhā gadā·pataiś cūrṇa·yāmāsa coddhatam |
bāṣkalaṃ bhindi·pālena bāṇai·stāmraṃ tathān·dhakam || 18

ugrāsyā·muga·vīryaṃ ca tathaiva ca mahāhanum |
trinetrā ca triśūlena jaghāna parameśvarī || 19

biḍā·lasyā·sinā kāyāt pātayāmāsa vai śiraḥ |
durdharaṃ durmukhaṃ cobhau śarair·ninye yamakṣayam || 20

evaṃ samkṣī·yamāṇe tu svasainye mahiṣāsuraḥ |
māhiṣeṇa svarūpeṇa trāsa·yāmāsa tān gaṇāṇ || 21

kāmścīt·tuṇda·prahāreṇa khurak·ṣepais tathāparān |
lāṇgūla·tāḍi·taṃścanyāñ śrṅgā·bhyāṃ ca vidāritān || 22

vegena kāmścidaparān nādena bhramaṇena ca |
niḥśvāsa·pavane·nānyān pātayāmāsa bhūtale || 23

nipātya pramathā·nīka·mabhya·dhāvata so'surah |
siṃhaṃ hantuṃ mahādevyāḥ kopāṃ cakre tato'mbikā || 24

so'pi kopān·mahāvīryaḥ khurak·ṣuṇṇa·mahītalāḥ |
śrṅgā·bhyāṃ parvatānuccām·ścikṣepa ca nanāda ca || 25

vega·bhramaṇa·vikṣuṇṇā maḥī tasya vya·śīryata |
lāṅgūlenā·hata·ścāb·diḥ plāva·yāmāsa sarvataḥ || 26

dhuta·śṛṅgavi·bhinnāśca khaṇḍaṁ khaṇḍaṁ yayur·ghanāḥ |
śvāsā·nilāstāḥ śataśo nipetur nabhaso'calāḥ || 27

iti kroḍha samādh·māta·māpa·tantaṁ mahāsuram |
drṣṭvā sā caṇḍikā kopam tadva·dhāya tadākarot || 28

sā kṣiptvā tasya vai pāśam taṁ babandha mahāsuram |
tatyāja māhiṣam rūpam so'pi badḍho mahāmṛdhe || 29

tataḥ siṁho'bhavat·sadyo yāvat tasyāmbikā śiraḥ |
chinatti tāvat puruṣaḥ khaḍga pāṇira·drśyata || 30

tata evāśu puruṣam devī ciccheda sāyakaiḥ |
taṁ khaḍga·carmaṇā sārḍham tataḥ so'bhūn·mahāgajaḥ || 31

kareṇa ca mahāsiṁham taṁ cakarṣa jagarja ca |
karṣa·tastu karaṁ devī khaḍgena nira·kr̥ntata || 32

tato mahāsuro bhūyo māhiṣam vapurās·thitaḥ |
tathaiva kṣobhayā·māsa trailokyam sacarācam || 33

tataḥ krudhā jaganmātā caṇḍikā pānamuttamam |
papau punaḥ punaścaiva jahā·sāruṇa locanā || 34

nanarḍa cāsuraḥ so'pi balavīrya·madod·dhataḥ ||
viṣāṇābhyām ca cikṣepa caṇḍikām prati bhūdharān || 35

sā ca tān prahitām·stena cūrṇa·yantī śarot·karaiḥ |
uvāca taṁ madoddhūta mukha rāgā kulākṣaram || 36

devyuvāca || 37

garja garja kṣaṇam mūḍha madhu yāvat·pibāmyaham |
mayā tvayi hate'traiva garji·ṣyan·tyāśu devatāḥ || 38

ṛṣiruvāca || 39

evamuktvā samutpatya sārūḍhā taṁ mahāsuram |
pādenā·kramya kaṇṭhe ca śulenaina·matā·ḍayat || 40

tataḥ so'pi padā·krāntas tayā nija·mukhāt tataḥ |
ardha·niṣkrānta evāsīd devyā vīryeṇa samvṛtaḥ || 41

ardha·niṣkrānta evāsau yudhya·māno mahāsuraḥ |
tayā mahāsinā devyā śiraś·chittvā nipātitaḥ || 42

tato hāhākṛtaṁ sarvaṁ daitya sainyam nanāśa tat |
praharṣam ca param jagmuḥ sakalā devatāgaṇāḥ || 43

tuṣṭu·vustām surā devīm saha divyair maharṣibhiḥ |
jagur gandharva patayo nanṛtuścāp sarogaṇāḥ || 44

om

chapter 4

Shakradi-stuti

The longest and most eloquent of the Chandi's four hymns. Known as the Shakradi stuti (Praise by Indra and the host of gods).

This chapter has some long shlokas. These are commonly recited in two ways. (1) Split it into two halves, and pause after each half. (2) Split it into four quarters, and pause after each quarter.

The gita press printed edition assumes that the reciter is splitting the verse into two halves (with two pauses).

If you split it into 4 quarters (with four pauses), you'll have to make some small changes. if you split it into four quarters, the gita press text changes to "triguNApi doShaiH / na", "tRptihetuH / uccAryase", "asta-samasta-doShaiH / vidyAsi" and "karmANi / atyAdRtaH". In the gita press edition, there is a "hyphen" in all these spots to indicate that you can't pause there without a minor change in the text.

dhyanam

om kālā·bhrābhām kātākṣai·rarikula·bhayadām

maulibad·dhen·durekhām

śaṅkham cakram kṛpāṇam trīśikha·mapikarai·rudva·hantīm

trinetram |

siṃha·skandhā·dhirūḍhām tribhuvana·makhilam tejasā

pūrayantīm

dhāyāyed durgām jayā·khyām tridaśa·parivṛtām sevitām siddhi kāmāḥ

||

om aiṃ hrīm klīm jaya durgā caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

oṃ namaścaṇḍikāyai

oṃ ṛṣiruvāca || 1

śakrādayaḥ suragaṇā nihate'tivīrye
tasmin·durātmani surāribale ca devyā |
tām tuṣṭuvuḥ praṇati namra śiro dharāṃsā
vāgbhiḥ praharṣa pulakod·gamacāru·dehāḥ || 2

devyā yayā tatamidam jagadātma-śaktyā
niśśeṣa·devagaṇa-śakti·samūhamūrtyā |
tāmambikā·makhila·deva·maharṣi·pūjyām
bhaktyā natāḥ sma vidadhātu śubhāni sā naḥ || 3

yasyāḥ prabhāva·matulam bhagavāna·nanto
brahmā haraśca nahi vaktu·malaṃ balaṃ ca |
sā caṇḍikā·khila·jagat·paripālanāya
nāśāya cāśubha bhayasya matiṃ karotu || 4

yā śrīḥ svayaṃ sukr̥tinām bhavane·śvalakṣmīḥ
pāpāt·manām kṛtadhīyām hṛdayeṣu buddhiḥ |
śradbhā satām kulajana prabhavasya lajjā
tām tvām natāḥ sma paripālaya devi viśvam || 5

kiṃ varṇayāma tava rūpa·macintya·metat
kiṃ·cāti·vīrya·masura·kṣaya·kāri bhūri |
kiṃ cāhaveṣu caritāni tavād bhutāni
sarveṣu devyasura·deva gaṇādi·keṣu || 6

doṣaiḥ / na (with pause) or doṣair-na (without pause)

hetuḥ samasta·jagatām triguṇāpi doṣaiḥ- (doṣair-na)
na jñāyase hariharā·dibhirapya·pārā |
sarvā·śrayā·khilamidam jagadam·śabhūtam-
avyākṛtā hi paramā prakṛtis tvamādyā || 7

hetuḥ / uccār (with pause) or hetu-ruccār (without pause)

yasyāḥ samasta·suratā samudīraṇena
tr̥ptiṃ prayāti sakaleṣu makheṣu devi |
svāhāsi vai pitṛgaṇasya ca tr̥pti·hetuḥ- (hetu-ruccār)
uccāryase tvamata eva janaiḥ svadhā ca || 8

doṣaiḥ / vidyāsi (with pause) or doṣair-vidyāsi (without pause) doṣair vidyāsi

yā mukti heturavi cintya mahāvratā tvam
abhyasyase suniya·tendriya tattva sārāiḥ |
mokṣār·thibhir muni·bhira·sta samasta doṣaiḥ-
(doṣair-vidyāsi)
vidyāsi sā bhagavatī paramā hi devi || 9

śabdātmikā suvi·malargya·juṣām nidhānam-
udgītha·ramya padapāṭha·vatām ca sāmnam |
devi trayī bhagavatī bhava·bhāvanāya
vārttā ca sarva jagatām paramārtti hantrī || 10

medhāsi devi viditākhila·śāstra·sārā
durgāsi durga·bhava sāgara naurasaṅgā |
śrīḥ kaiṭabhāri hṛdayai kakṛ·tādhivāsā
gaurī tvameva śaśi·mauli·kṛta·pratiṣṭhā || 11

īṣat·sahā·samamalaṃ paripūrṇa·candra-
bimbānukāri kanakot·tama kānti kāntam |
atyad·bhutaṃ prahr̥·tamāt·taruṣā tathāpi
vaktraṃ vilokya sahasā mahiṣāsureṇa || 12

dr̥ṣṭvā tu devi kupitaṃ bhr̥ukuṭi·karālam- (karāla-mudyac)
udyac chaśāṅka sadṛśac chavi yanna sadyaḥ |
prāṇān mumoca mahiṣas·tadatīva citraṃ
kaijīvyate hi kupitān·taka·darśanena || 13

devi prasīda paramā bhavatī bhavāya
sadyo vināśayasi kopavatī kulāni |
vijñāta·meta·dadhu·naiva yadas·tametan- (tameta-nītaṃ)
nītaṃ balaṃ suvipulaṃ mahiṣāsurasya || 14

siddha mantra for overall growth and prosperity

te sammatā janapadeṣu dhanāni teṣāṃ
teṣāṃ yaśaṃsi na ca sīdati dharma·vargaḥ |
dhanyāsta eva nibhṛtāt·maja·bhṛtyadārā
yeṣaṃ sadābhyu·dayadā bhavatī prasannā || 15

karmāṇy / atyā (with pause) or karmāṇ yatyā (without pause)

dharmyāṇi devi sakalāni sadaiva karmāṇy- (karmāṇ-yatyā)
atyādṛtaḥ pratidinaṃ sukr̥tī karoti |
svargaṃ prayāti ca tato bhavatī prasādāl-
loka·traye'pi phaladā nanu devi tena || 16

siddha mantra to eliminate poverty, misery, fear and grant clear mind

durge smṛtā harasi bhītima śeṣa jantoḥ
svasthaiḥ smṛtā matimatīva śubhāṃ dadāsi |
dāridrya duḥkha bhaya·hāriṇi kā tvadanyā
sarvopakāra karaṇāya sadārdra·cittā || 17

ebhir·hatair·jagadupaiti sukhaṃ tathāite
kurvantu nāma narakāya cirāya pāpam |
saṅgrāma·mṛtyu·madhigamya divaṃ prayāntu
matveti nūnamahitān·vinihaṃsi devi || 18

dr̥ṣṭvaiva kiṃ na bhavatī prakaroti bhasma
sarvā surānariṣu yat·prahiṇoṣi śastram |
lokān·prayāntu ripavo'pi hi śastrapūtā
itthaṃ matir·bhavati teṣvapi tetisādhvī || 19

khaḍga·prabhā·nikara·visphuraṇais·tathograiḥ
śūlāgrakānti nivahena dr̥śo'surāṇām |
yannāgatā vilaya·maṃśu·madindu·khaṇḍa-
yogyānanaṃ tava vilokayatāṃ tadetat || 20

durvṛtta·vṛtta·śamanaṃ tava devi śīlaṃ
rūpaṃ tathai·tada·vicintya·matulya·manyaiḥ |
vīryaṃ ca hantr̥ hr̥tadeva·parākramāṇām
vairiṣvapi prakāṭi·taiva dayā tvayet·tham || 21

kenopamā bhavatu te'sya parākramasya
rūpaṃ ca śatru bhaya kārya ti hāri kutra |
citte kṛpā samara·niṣṭhu·ratā ca dr̥ṣṭā
tvayyeva devi varade bhuvana·traye'pi || 22

trailokya·metad·akhilaṃ ripunā·śanena
trātaṃ tvayā samara·mūrdhani te'pi hatvā |
nītā divaṃ ripugaṇā bhaya·mapya·pāstam
asmāka·munmada·surāri·bhavaṃ namaste || 23

śulena pāhi no devi pāhi khaḍgena cāmbike |
ghaṇṭā-svanena naḥ pāhi cāpaj-yāniḥ-svanena ca || 24

prācyāṃ rakṣa pratīcyāṃ ca caṇḍike rakṣa dakṣiṇe |
bhrāmaṇe-nāṭma-śūlasya uttarasyāṃ tathēśvari || 25

saumyāni yanī rūpāṇi trailokye vicaranti te |
yāni cāt-yartha-ghorāṇi tai rakṣās-māṃs tathā bhuvam || 26

khaḍga śūla gadādīni yāni cāstrāṇi te'mbike |
kara-pallava-saṅgīni tairasmān rakṣa sarvataḥ || 27

ṛṣiruvāca || 28

evaṃ stutā surair-divyaiḥ kusumair-nandanod-bhavaiḥ |
arcitā jagatām dhātṛ tathā gandhā-nule-panaiḥ || 29

bhaktyā samastais tridaśair divyair dhūpaistu dhūpitā |
prāha prasāda-sumukhī samastān praṇatān surān || 30

devyuvāca || 31

vriyatām tridaśāḥ sarve yadas-matto'bhivāñchitam || 32

devāūcuḥ || 33

bhagavatyā kṛtaṃ sarvaṃ nakiñcid-avaśiṣyate || 34

yadayaṃ nihataḥ śatrur asmākaṃ mahiṣāsuraḥ |
yadi cāpi varo deyas tvayā-smākaṃ maheśvari || 35

saṃsmṛtā saṃsmṛtā tvam no hiṃsethāḥ paramāpadaḥ |
yaśca martyaḥ stavairebhis tvām sto-ṣyatya-malānane || 36

tasya vittarddhi vibhavair-dhana-dārādi-sampadām |
vṛddhaye'smat-prasannā tvam bhavethāḥ sarvadāmbike || 37

ṛṣiruvāca || 38

iti prasāditā devair jagato'rthe tathāt-manah |
tathet yuktvā bhadrakālī babhūvān-tarhitā nṛpa || 39

ityetat-kathitaṃ bhūpa sambhūtā sā yathā purā |
devī deva-śarīrebhyo jagat traya hitaiṣiṇī || 40

punaśca gaurī-dehātsā samud-bhūtā yathā-bhavat |
vadhāya duṣṭa daityānām tathā śumbha niśumbhayoḥ || 41

rakṣaṇāya ca lokānām devānā-mupakāriṇī |
tac-chṛ-ṇuṣva mayā-khyātaṃ yathā-vatkatha-yāmi te || 42

| hīṃ om |

uttara caritrasya



In the third episode the chief demons are Sumbha (Asmita: “I”/ “Me”, the pseudo-self) and Nisumbha (Mamata: “Mine”, the attachment to things that the false self clings to) who along with their generals Canda (pra-vrtti or extraverted psychic energy), Munda (ni-vrtti or introverted psychic energy), Dhumralochana (distorted perception) and Raktabija (citta vrttis or incessant compulsive thought processes), are a formidable force to reckon with. Overcoming these subtler demons requires a luminous, benevolent and beautiful manifestation, one that can enlighten and liberate. This is the manifestation as Maha Sarasvati predominated by Sattva.

Overview

Overview of Uttama Charitram

The Uttama Charitram (i.e. last portion of story) consists of 9 chapters. As mentioned before, Maha Maya is attributed in the form of Maha Saraswati in this section.

Chapter 5 Devi Duta Samvada

Once upon a time, two Asuras viz. Shumbha and Nishumbha ruled the three worlds by assuming the authority and duties of Indra, Surya, Chandra, Kubera, Yama, Varuna, Vayu, Agni, etc. They also assumed Havir Bhagams of Devas (Offerings made in fire ceremonies to various Deities).

Devas, unable to bear this plight, reach Himalayas and pray to Vishnu Maya. They request Her to come to their rescue as promised before. The Devi (Kaushiki) appears before them and agrees to destroy Nishumbha, Shumba and their army.

The Devi is spotted by two Asuras viz. Chanda and Munda who promptly inform the same to Shumbha. They tell him that the Devi is very beautiful and it is apt for Shumbha to get her. Shumbha sends Sugriva as his envoy to Devi. Sugriva reaches the abode of Devi and conveys Shumbha's message that it will be apt for her to marry Shumbha and enjoy all wealth.

Devi tells Sugriva that She had made a vow long before that she would marry only the one who defeats her in a fight and requests him to convey the same to Shumbha.

Chapter 6 Dhumralochana Vadham

Upon hearing Devi's reply through Sugriva, Shumbha sends Dhumralochana to bring Devi to him by force. Dhumralochana reaches the abode of Devi with an army of 60,000 Asuras. When Dhumralochana tries to go near Devi, Devi burns him instantly by her Humkara. His army also gets destroyed by Devi's Vahana (Vehicle) , the Lion.

Learning about Dhumralochana's death, Shumba asks Chanda and Munda to accomplish the same task.

Chapter 7 Chanda Munda Vadham

Chanda and Munda, along with their large army, start fighting with Devi. On seeing them, Devi's face becomes black in anger. From her face, a fierce and dark colored Devi known as Kali comes out. Maha Kali destroys the army of Chanda and Munda. Later She severs the heads of both of them and Devi assumes the name Chamunda because of this.

Chapter 8 Raktabija Vadham

Shumbha orders the entire Asura army to be assembled to fight Devi. He also joins the army. The Asura army surrounds Kali Devi. The respective powers for Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and other Devas emanate from them – Brahmani, Maheshvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Aindri, Narasimhi, etc. - and reach Kali Devi. Then Devi sends Lord Shiva as her envoy to Shumbha and therefore came to be known as Shiva Duti. But Asura's army fiercely fights with Devi. The various forms of Devi fight with the Asura army and destroy them.

Seeing this, an Asura known as Raktabija comes and fights with Devi. From every drop of blood that falls from his body on to the ground, another equivalent Asura comes into being and fights with Devi. Devi orders Chamunda to open Her mouth and drink all the blood that falls from the body of Raktabija. Chamunda drinks all the blood emanating from Raktabija's body and finally Raktabija falls dead devoid of blood. Devas become very happy on the death of Raktabija.

Chapter 9 Nishumbha Vadham

Nishumbha prepares himself to fight with Devi on seeing that a large portion of their army have been destroyed by Devi. A fierce fight breaks between Nishumbha and Devi and Devi finally kills him by piercing his heart with Shula (Trident).

Chapter 10 Shumba Vadham

Shumbha, on seeing the death of his beloved brother Nishumbha, becomes extremely angry and complains to Devi that She is actually putting up a proxy fight with the help of other Devis. Devi replies that there is nothing beyond and separate from Her and makes all the Shakti forms to merge back into Her.

A fierce fight breaks between the two and finally Devi kills him by piercing Shula (Trident) into his heart.

Upon Shumbha's death the entire universe becomes happy and devoid of any bad omens.

Chapter 11 Devi Stuti

Immensely pleased with the destruction of Asuras, all Devas assemble in front of Devi and praise Her with a stuti which is known by the name Narayani Stuti.

Devi becomes immensely pleased with their praise and describes some of her future incarnations and the names by which She will be known as – e.g. Rakta Dantika, Sadakshi, Shakambhari, Durga, Bhima Devi, Bhramari, etc.

Chapter 12 Phala Stuti

Devi further explains the benefits that will accrue to one who chants and/or listens to Devi Mahatmyam with devotion. She declares that whoever chants or listens to Devi Mahatmyam on Ashtami or Navami or Chaturdashi (i.e. 8th or 9th or 14th Lunar day) will never see any obstacle, poverty, separation from loved ones, trouble from enemies, etc. Her presence will be felt in places where Devi Mahatmyam is chanted. The chanter can look forward all kinds of wealth, pleasure and boons. Upon giving this boon, Devi disappears.

Sage Vasishtha concludes his narration of Devi Mahatmyam to King Surata and Vaishya with this.

Chapter 13 Vara Vadham

Sage Vasishtha then orders King Surata and Vaishya to surrender themselves to Devi. Both of them seek the blessings of the Sage, take leave of him and perform intense Tapas by focusing on Devi.

Devi appears before them after 3 years of intense Tapas and grants them boons. The King prays for redemption of his Kingdom and become an indefatigable King in his next birth. Vaishya seeks true knowledge (Gyana) that liberates one from ego and attachment. Devi grants their wishes and disappears.

The King will be known as Savarni Manu in future after getting rebirth from Surya Bhagavan.

dhyānam



vinīyogaḥ

asya śrī uttara caritrasya rudra ṛṣiḥ | śrīmahāsarvasvatī devatā |
anuṣṭup chandaḥ | bhīmā śaktiḥ | bhrāmarī bījam | sūryas
tattvaṃ | sāmavedaḥ svarūpam |
śrīmahāsarvasvatī prītyarthe uttara caritra pāṭhe vinīyogaḥ |

dhyānam

oṃ

ghaṇṭā śūla halāni śaṅkha musale cakram dhanuḥ sāyakaṃ
hastābjair dadhatīm ghanānta vilasacchītām śutulya prabhām |
gauṛīdeha samudbhavām trijagatām ādhārabhūtām
mahāpūrvāmatra sarvasvatīm anubhaje śumbhādi daityārdinīm ||

oṃ klīm śrīmahāsarvasvatī caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

chapter 5

Tantrika Devi Suktam

This is the third hymn; known as Aparajita-stuti or Tantrika Devi Suktam. In this hymn there are more than twenty slokas beginning with 'ya devi sarva bhuteshu', indicating that the devi is present in all creatures as consciousness, as power, as intellect, as memory, as sleep, as delusion, as desire, as activity, as prosperity, as forgiveness, as faith, as loveliness, and so on, reminding us of the Vibhuti Yoga of Gita.

This beautiful hymn is a powerful meditation by itself, a combination of meditation, affirmation and mantra.



oṃ namaścāṇḍikāyai

oṃ klīm ṛṣiruvāca || 1

purā śum**ba**·niśum**ba**·bhā**bh**yā·masurā**bh**yām śacīpateḥ |
trailokyaṃ yajña **ba**hāgāśca hṛtā madabalā-śrayāt || 2

tāveva sūryatām tadvad **ad**hikāraṃ tathain·davam |
kauberamathā yāmyaṃ ca cakrāte varuṇasya ca || 3

tāveva pavanard**dh**iṃ ca cakratur·vahni·karma ca |
tato devā vini**rd**hūtā **bh**raṣṭa·rājyāḥ parājitāḥ || 4

hṛtā**dh**i·kāās·tridaśās tā**bh**yām sarve nirākṛtāḥ |
mahāsurā**bh**yām tām devīm saṃ·smarantya parājitām || 5

tayāsmākaṃ varo datto yathāpatsu smṛtāk·hilāḥ |
bhavatām nāśayiśyāmi tat·kṣaṇāt paramāpadaḥ || 6

iti kṛtvā matiṃ devā himavantam nageśvaram |
jagmustatra tato devīm viṣṇumāyām pratuṣṭuvuḥ || 7

devā ūcuḥ || 8

namo devyai mahādevyai śivāyai satatam namaḥ |
namaḥ prakṛtyai **bh**adrāyai niyatāḥ praṇatāḥ sma tām || 9

raudrāyai namo nityāyai gauryai **dh**ātryai namo namaḥ |
jyotsnāyai cendurūpiṇyai su**kh**āyai satatam namaḥ || 10

kalyāṇyai praṇatām vṛddhyai sid**dh**yai kurmo namo namaḥ |
nairṛtyai **bh**ū**bh**ṛtām lakṣmyai śarvāṇyai te namo namaḥ || 11

durgāyai durga·pārāyai sārāyai sarva·kāriṇyai |
khyātyai tathaiva kṛṣṇāyai **dh**ūmrāyai satatam namaḥ || 12

atisaumyāti **ra**udrāyai natās·tasyai namo namaḥ |
namo jagat pratiṣṭhāyai devyai kṛtyai namo namaḥ || 13

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu viṣṇu māyetī śabditā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 14-16

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu cetanetya**bh**i **dh**īyate |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 17-19

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu buddhi rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 20-22

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu nidrā rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 23-25

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu kṣudhā rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 26-28

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu chāyā rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 29-31

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu śakti rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 32-34

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu trṣṇā rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 35-37

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu kṣānti rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 38-40

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu jāti rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 41-43

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu lajjā rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 44-46

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu śānti rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 47-49

yā devī sarva**bh**ūteṣu śrad**dh**ā rūpeṇa saṃsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 50-52

yā devī sarva**bhūteṣu** kānti rūpeṇa saṁsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 53-55

yā devī sarva**bhūteṣu** lakṣmī rūpeṇa saṁsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 56-58

yā devī sarva**bhūteṣu** vṛtti rūpeṇa saṁsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 59-61

yā devī sarva**bhūteṣu** smṛti rūpeṇa saṁsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 62-64

yā devī sarva**bhūteṣu** dayā rūpeṇa saṁsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 65-67

yā devī sarva**bhūteṣu** tuṣṭi rūpeṇa saṁsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 68-70

yā devī sarva**bhūteṣu** mātṛ rūpeṇa saṁsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 71-73

yā devī sarva**bhūteṣu** bhrānti rūpeṇa saṁsthitā |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 74-76

indriyāṇā madiṣṭhātrī bhūtānāṁ cākhileṣu yā |
bhūteṣu satataṁ tasyai vyāpti devyai namo namaḥ || 77

citrūpeṇa yā kṛtsna-metad vyāpya sthitā jagat |
namastasyai || namastasyai || namastasyai namo namaḥ || 78-80

stutā suraiḥ pūrva-ma**bhīṣṭa**-saṁśrayāt
tathā surendreṇa dineṣu sevītā |

karotu sā naḥ śubha hetur īśvarī
śubhāni bhadraṇyabhi hantu cāpadaḥ || 81

tāpitaiḥ asmā (with pause) or tāpitair-asmā (without pause)

yā sāmpra^{ra}taṁ cod**dh**ata-daitya-tāpitair- (tāpitaiḥ+asmā)
asmā**bhi** rīśā ca surair namasyate |
yā ca smṛta tat-kṣaṇameva hanti naḥ
sarvāpado **bh**akti-vinamra mūrti**bhiḥ** || 82

ṛṣiruvāca || 83

evaṁ stavādi yuktānāṁ devānāṁ tatra pārvatī |
snātu-ma**bhyā**-yayau toye jāhnavyā nṛpanandana || 84

sābravīttān surān subhrūr bhavad**bhiḥ** stūyate'tra kā |
śārīra kośa-taścāsyāḥ samud-bhūtā bravīc**chivā** || 85

stotraṁ mamaitat-kriyate śumbha-daitya-nirākṛtaiḥ |
devaiḥ sametaiḥ samare niśumb**hena** parājitaiḥ || 86

śārīra kośādyat tasyāḥ pārvatyā niḥsṛtāmbikā |
kauśikīti samasteṣu tato lokeṣu gīyate || 87

tasyāṁ vinir-gatāyāṁ tu kṛṣṇā bhūtsāpi pārvatī |
kāliketi samā**khyātā** himācala kṛtāsrayā || 88

tato'mbikāṁ paraṁ rūpaṁ bibhrāṇāṁ sumanoharam |
dadarśa caṇḍo muṇḍaśca bhr̥tyau śumbha niśumb**hayoḥ** || 89

tā**bhyāṁ** śumbhāya cā**khyātā** ātīva sumanoharā |
kāpyāste strī mahārāja bhāsayantī himācalam || 90

naiva tādr̥k kvacidrūpaṁ dr̥ṣṭaṁ kenacid-uttamam |
jñāyatāṁ kāpyasau devī gr̥hyatāṁ cāsureśvara || 91

strī ratnamati cārvaṅgī dyotayantī diśastviṣā |
sā tu tiṣṭhati daityendra tāṁ bhavān draṣṭu marhati || 92

yāni ratnāni maṇayo gajā-śvādīni vai prabho |
trailokye tu samastāni sāmpra^{ra}taṁ bhānti te gr̥he || 93

airāvataḥ samānīto gajaratnaṃ purandarāt |
pārijāta taruścāyaṃ tathai·voccaiḥ śravā hayaḥ || 94

vimānaṃ haṃsa saṃyukta·metat·tiṣṭhati te'ṅgaṇe |
ratna·bhūta·mihānītaṃ yadāsīd vedhaso'dbhutam || 95

niḍhireṣa mahāpadmaḥ samānīto dhaneśvarāt |
kiñjalkinīṃ dadau cābdhir mālā·mamlā napañkajām || 96

chatraṃ te vāruṇaṃ gehe kāñcana·srāvi tiṣṭhati |
tathāyaṃ syanda·navaro yaḥ purāsīt prajāpateḥ || 97

mṛtyorut·krāntidā nāma śakti·rīśa tvayā hṛtā |
pāśaḥ salila·rājasya bhrātus·tava parigrahe || 98

niśumbha·syābdhi jātāśca samastā ratna·jātayaḥ |
vaḥnirapi dadau tubhyam agni śauce ca vāsasī || 99

evaṃ daityendra ratnāni samastān yā·hṛtāni te |
strīratna·meṣa kalyāṇī tvayā kasmāna gṛhyate || 100

rṣiruvāca || 101

niśamyeti vacaḥ śumbhaḥ sa tadā caṇḍa muṇḍayoḥ |
preṣayāmāsa sugrīvaṃ dūtaṃ devyā mahāsuram || 102

iti ceti ca vaktavyā sā gatvā vacanān mama |
yathā cābhyeti sampṛītya tathā kāryaṃ tvayā laghu || 103

sa tatra gatvā yatrāste śailod deśe'ti śobhane |
sā devī tāṃ tataḥ prāha ślakṣṇaṃ madhurayā girā || 104

dūta ruvāca || 105

devi daityeśvaraḥ śumbhas·trailokye parameśvaraḥ |
dūto'haṃ preṣitastena tvat sakāśa·mihāgataḥ || 106

avyāhatā-jñāḥ sarvāsu yaḥ sadā devayoniṣu |
niṛji·tākḥila·daityāriḥ sa yadāha śṛṇuśva tat || 107

mama trailokya·makḥilaṃ mama devā vaśānugāḥ |
yajña·bhāgā·nahaṃ sarvā·nupā·śnāmi pṛthak pṛthak || 108

trailokye vararātnāni mama vaśyān yaśeṣataḥ |
tathāiva gajaratnaṃ ca hṛtvā devendra vāhanam || 109

kṣīroda·mathanod bhūtam aśvaratnaṃ mamā·maraiḥ |
uccaiḥ śravasasaṃ·jñaṃ tat praṇipatya samarpitam || 110

yāni cānyāni deveṣu gandarveṣū rageṣu ca |
ratna bhūtāni bhūtāni tāni mayyeva śobhane || 111

strī ratna bhūtāṃ tvāṃ devi loka manyāmahe vayam |
sā tvam·asmān·upāgaccha yato ratna bhujo vayam || 112

māṃ vā mamā·nujaṃ vāpi niśumbha muru·vikramam |
bhaja tvam cañca·lāpāṅgi ratna bhūtāsi vai yataḥ || 113

paramaiśvarya·matulaṃ prāpsyase matpari·grahāt |
etad buddhyā samālocya matpari·grahatāṃ vraja || 114

rṣiruvāca || 115

ityuktā sā tadā devī gambhī·rāntaḥ smitāḥ jagau |
durgā bhagavatī bhadra yayedam dhāryate jagat || 116

devyuvāca || 117

satyamuktaṃ tvayā nātra mithyā kiñcit·tvayo·ditam |
trailokyā·dhipatiḥ śumbho niśumbha·ścāpi tādrśaḥ || 118

kiṃ tvatra yat pratijñātaṃ mithyā tat kriyate katham |
srūyatām alpa buddhitvāt pratijñā yā kṛtā purā || 119

yo māṃ jayati saṅgrāme yo me darpaṃ vyapohati |
yo me pratibalo loke sa me bhartā bhaviṣyati || 120

tadā gacchatu śumbho'tra niśumbho vā mahāsuraḥ |
māṃ jitvā kiṃ cireṇātra pāṇiṃ grhṇātu me laghu || 121

dūta uvāca || 122

avaliptāsi maivaṃ tvaṃ devi brūhi mamāgrataḥ |
trailokye kaḥ pumāṃ stiṭhe dagre śumbha niśumbhayoḥ || 123

anyeṣāmapī daityānāṃ sarve devā na vai yudhi |
tiṣṭhanti sammukhe devi kiṃ punaḥ strī tvamekikā || 124

indrādyāḥ sakalā devās tasthur yeṣāṃ na saṃyuge |
śumbhādīnāṃ kathaṃ teṣāṃ strī prayāsyasi sammukham || 125

sā tvaṃ gaccha mayai vaktā pārśvaṃ śumbha niśumbhayoḥ |
keśā karṣaṇa nirdhūta gauravā mā gamiṣyasi || 126

devyuvāca || 127

evametad balī śumbho niśumbhaś cāti vīryavān |
kiṃ karomi pratijñā me yadana locitā purā || 128

sa tvaṃ gaccha mayoktaṃ te yadetat sarva mādṛtaḥ |
tadā cakṣvā surendrāya sa ca yuktaṃ karotu tat || 129

oṃ

chapter 6

The Slaying of Dhumralochana

humkāreṇaiva taṃ bhasma sākakārāmbikā tataḥ || 13
The Goddess reduced the demon to ashes by a mere heave of her breath
(humkara)

dhyaṇam

oṃ nāgā·dhī·śvara viṣṭarāṃ phaṇi phaṇot·taṃsoru ratnāvalī
bhāsvad·dehalatāṃ divā·karani·bhāṃ netra trayod·bhāsitām |
mālā kum·bha·kapāla nīrajakarāṃ candrār·dhacūḍāṃ parāṃ
sarva jñeśvara bhairavāṃ kanilayāṃ padmāvatīṃ cintaye ||

om aiṃ hrīṃ klīṃ padmāvatī caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

om namaścāṇḍikāyai

om ṛṣiruvāca || 1

ityākārṇya vaco devyāḥ sa dūto'marṣa pūritah |
samācaṣṭa samā-gamya daitya rājāya vistarāt || 2

tasya dūtasya tadvākya-mākarṇyā-surarāt tataḥ |
sakrodhaḥ prāha daityānā-madhipaṃ dhūmrālocanam || 3

he dhūmrāloca-nāśutvaṃ svasainya parivāritah |
tāmānaya balād duṣṭaṃ keśa-karṣaṇa vihvalām || 4

tatpari-trāṇadaḥ kaścīd yadi vottiṣṭhate'paraḥ |
sa hantavyo'maro vāpi yakṣo gandharva eva vā || 5

ṛṣiruvāca || 6

tenā-jñaptas-tataḥ śīghraṃ sa daityo dhūmrālocanaḥ |
vṛtaḥ ṣaṣṭyā sahasrāṇām asurāṇām drutaṃ yayau || 7

sa drṣṭvā tāṃ tato devīm tuhinācala saṃsthitām |
jagādoccaih prayāhītī mūlaṃ śumbha niśumbhayoḥ || 8

na cet prītyādya bhavatī madbhartāram upaiṣyati |
tato balān nayāmyeṣa keśa-karṣaṇa vihvalām || 9

devyuvāca || 10

daitye-śvareṇa prahito balavān balasaṃvṛtaḥ |
balān-nayasi māmevaṃ tataḥ kiṃ te karomyaham || 11

ṛṣiruvāca || 12

ityuktaḥ so'bhyadhā vattā-masuro dhūmrālocanaḥ |
huṃ-kāre-ṇaiva taṃ bhasma sā cakārāmbikā tataḥ || 13

atha krudhaṃ mahāsainya-masurāṇaṃ tathāmbikā |
vavarṣa sāyakai-stīkṣṇais tathā śakti paraśvadhāiḥ || 14

tato dhutasataḥ kopāt kṛtvā nādaṃ subhairavam |
papātā-sura-senāyāṃ siṃho devyāḥ sva-vāhanaḥ || 15

kāṃścit kara-prahāreṇa daityā nāsyena cāparān |
ākramya cādhare-ṇānyān sa jaghāna mahāsuraṇ || 16

keṣāñcit-pāṭayāmāsa nakhaiḥ koṣṭhāni kesarī |
tathā tala-prahāreṇa śirāṃsi kṛtavān prṭhak || 17

vicchinna-bāhu śirasaḥ kṛtāstena tathāpare |
papau ca rudhiraṃ koṣṭhā-danyeṣāṃ dhuta-kesaraḥ || 18

kṣaṇena tadbalaṃ sarvaṃ kṣayaṃ nītaṃ mahātmanā |
tena kesariṇā devyā vāhanenāti kopinā || 19

śrutvā tamasuraṃ devyā nihataṃ dhūmrālocanam |
balaṃ ca kṣayitaṃ kṛtsnam devī kesariṇā tataḥ || 20

cukopa daityā-dhipatiḥ śumbhaḥ pras-phuritā-dharaḥ |
ājñāpa-yāmāsa ca tau caṇḍa muṇḍau mahasurau || 21

he caṇḍa he muṇḍa balair bahuḥ parivāritau |
tatra gacchata gatvā ca sāsamānī-yatāṃ laḡu || 22

keśeṣvā-kṛṣya badhvā vā yadi vaḥ saṃśayo yudhi |
tadā-śeṣā-yudaiḥ sarvair asurair vinihanyatām || 23

tasyāṃ hatāyāṃ duṣṭāyāṃ siṃhe ca vinipātite |
śīghra-māgam-yatāṃ badhvā gṛhītvā tā-mathāmbikām || 24

om

chapter 7

The slaying of Chanda and Munda

Chanda represents (Pra-vrtti) and Munda (Ni-vrtti) both outward and inward movements of citta vrttis.

dhyaanam

om dhyāyeyam ratna pīṭhe śukakala paṭhitam śṛṇvatīm śyā malāṅgīm
nya·stai·kāṅghrīm saroje śaśi śakala·dharām
vallakīm vāda.yantīm |
kahlā·rābad·dhamālām niya·mita·vilasac colikām rakta·vastrām
mātaṅgīm śankha·pātrām madhura·madhu·madām
citrakod·bhāsi·bhālām ||

om aiṃ hrīm klīm rajamātaṅgī caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ



om namaścaṇḍikāyai

om ṛṣi ruvāca || 1

ājñap·tāste tato daityās caṇḍa muṇḍa purogamāḥ |
caturāṅga balopetā yayu·rabhyudya·tāyudhāḥ || 2

dadṛśuste tato devī·mīśadhāsām vya·vasthitām |
siṃhas·yopari śailendra·śṛṅge mahati kāñcane || 3

te drṣṭvā tāṃ samā·dātu·mudyamaṃ cakru·rudyatāḥ |
ākṛṣṭa cāpā·sidharās tathānye tat samīpagāḥ || 4

tataḥ kopam cakā·roccair·ambikā tānarīn prati |
kopena cāsya vadanam maṣī·varṇama bhūttadā || 5

bhrukuṭi kuṭilāt tasyā lalāṭa phalakād drutam |
kāli karāla·vadanā viniṣ·krāntāsi pāśinī || 6

vicitra khaṭvāṅ·gadharā naramālā vibhūṣaṇā |
dvīpi·carma parīdhānā śuṣkamām·sāti bhairavā || 7

ativistāra·vadanā jihvā·lalana·bhīṣaṇā |
nimagnā rakta nayanā nādāpūrita diṁmukhā || 8

sā vege·nābhipatitā ghātayantī mahāsurān |
sainye tatra surārīṇā·mabha·ṣayata tadbalam || 9

pārṣṇi·grāhāṅ·kuśagrāhi yodha ghaṇṭā samanvitān |
samā·dāyaika·hastena mukhe cikṣepa vāraṇān || 10

tathaiva yodham turagai ratham sārathinā saha |
nikṣipyā vaktre daśanaś carva·yantyati bhairavam || 11

ekam jagrāha keśeṣu grīvā·yāmatha cāparam |
pādenā·kramya caivānya·murasānya·mapothayat || 12

tairmuktāni ca śastrāṇi mahāstrāṇi tathāsuraiḥ |
mukhena jagrā·haruṣā daśanair mathi·tānyapi || 13

balinām tadbalaṃ sarva·masurāṇām durātmanām |
mamardā·bhakṣayac cānyān anyāṃscā·tāḍayat tathā || 14

asinā nihitāḥ kecit kecit khaṭvāṅga tāḍitāḥ |
jagmur·vināśam asurā dantā grābhi hatās·tathā || 15

kṣaṇena tadbalaṃ sarva·masurāṇām nipātitaṃ |
drṣṭvā caṇḍo·bhīdudrāva tāṃ kālīmati bhīṣaṇām || 16

śaravarṣair mahā bhīmair bhīmākṣīm tāṃ mahāsuraḥ |
chāda·yāmāsa cakrai·śca muṇḍaḥ kṣiptaiḥ sahasraśaḥ || 17

tāni cakraṇ·yanekāni viśamānāni tanmukham |
babhur·yathārka bimbāni subahūni ghanodaram || 18

tato jahāsā·tiruṣā bhīmaṃ bhairava nādinī |
kāli karāla vaktrāntar durdarśa daśanoj·jvalā || 19

utthāya ca mahāsiṃham devi caṇḍa madhāvata |
grhītvā cāsya keśeṣu śīrastenā·sinācchinat || 20

atha muṇḍo·bhya·dhāvattām drṣṭvā caṇḍam nipātitaṃ |
tamapya·pātayad bhūmau sākhaDgā·bhihataṃ ruṣā || 21

hataśeṣam tataḥ sainyam drṣṭvā caṇḍam nipātitaṃ |
muṇḍam ca sumahāvīryam diśo bheje bhayāturam || 22

śiraś caṇḍasya kāli ca grhītvā muṇḍameva ca |
prāha pracaṇḍāṭ·ṭahāsa miśrama·bhyetya caṇḍikām || 23

mayā tavātro·pahṛtau caṇḍa·muṇḍau mahāpaśu |
yudha·yajñe svayam śumbham niśumbham ca haniṣyasi || 24

ṛṣiruvāca || 25

tāvānītau tato dr̥ṣṭvā caṇḌa muṇḌau mahāsuraḥ |
uvāca kālīṃ kalyāṇī lalitāṃ caṇḌīkā vacaḥ || 26

yasmāc caṇḌaṃ ca muṇḌaṃ ca gr̥hītvā tvamupāgatā |
cāmuṇḍeti tato loke khyātā devi bhaviṣyasi || 27

om

chapter 8

The Slaying of Raktabija

Raktabija is symbolic of citta vrttis or thought process. Each vrtti leads to one more as thoughts multiply in geometric progression. Whenever a drop of blood falls to earth, another demon of identical size and strength springs up.



And for the sake of the well-being of the supreme gods, very valorous and powerful śaktis, having sprung forth from the bodies of Brahma, Siva, Skanda, Vishnu and Indra, and having the form of each, approached Candika.



macchastra pāta sambhūtān raktabindhūn mahāsurān |
raktabindhoḥ pratīccha tvam vaktreṇānena veginā ||
With this mouth (Kālī) quickly take in the drops of blood produced by
the fall of my weapons and the great Asuras generated out of the
drops of blood.

Desire and cravings are the source of all suffering. Desire is a mental activity, or thoughts and known as citta vrrtis.

The best method is to overcome the first desire, the thought, rather than having to fight a thousand more. Conquering this original desire will release us from this endless cycle of desire, which leads to the cycle of gratification and sorrow when these desires are not fulfilled.

Tantra refers to "Ashta Pasha" or eight nooses . ghR^iNA (aversion), lajjA (shame), bhaya (fear), sha~NkA (doubt), jugupsA (disgust), kula (attachment to a group based on activity), jAti (attachment to a group based on birth) and shlla (good character and modesty!!). Kalika destroys the eight nooses so that one can be liberated.

The eight pashas (nooses) do not necessarily block all purusharthas, but block one from moksha. For example, aversion (ghR^iNA) to some things (e.g. aversion to some evil people or aversion to some foods etc) is perfectly fine and one can do great dharmik things despite aversion to some things. Shame and fear of being calling a bad person may make one do good dharmik things in the world. So shame, fear, aversion etc. may also not stop one from dharma.

However, if any sense of shame or fear or aversion to anything is left, one cannot be liberated. The pashas are strictly in the context of moksha (liberation). They are what block one from liberation. They are associated with moksha. The eight pashas need to be destroyed for one to get there!

8 types of demons are described as coming to war with the Mother (Kalakeyas, mouryas etc). They stand for these 8 pashas.

The shadripos or 6 internal enemies (kaama - desires, kridha - anger, lobha - greed, moha - delusion, mada - wantonness, matsarya - jealousy) block one from doing one's dharma (righteous duty) and other purusharthas. They cloud one's judgment and may make one do adharma.

The Ashta Pasha

One cannot understand liberation without first understanding what binds one. Liberation is overcoming what binds one. What binds us and what limits our thinking? The eight bondages/nooses (ashta pashas) are what bind us. The six enemies (shadripos) are what fight us as we try to loosen the nooses).

As per Tantra philosophy there are 8 bondages/chains which bind soul to the Maya. These bondages are Ghrina (Hate), Lajjaa (Shame), Bhaya (Fear, shankaa(Doubt), Jugupsaa(censure/reproach), Kula (caste), Jaati(creed) and Sheela (Modesty). Any consciousness which is bound by these 8 bondages is called Jiva (Individual soul) and the consciousness who is free from all these chains is called Sadashiva (Universal consciousness - Free soul/God).

In Chapter 8 of Durga Saptshati, when Demons Chanda and Munda died, Shumbha the demon king becomes angry and ordered his army to start attacking. He cries , " O demons, I order all

armies of Asuras alongwith 86 Udyudhas, 84 Kambus, 50 Kotiviryas, 100 Dhomras, Kalakas, Dauhrids, Mauryas and Kalkeya demons to march for war.

Here Durga Saptshati reveals a great secret of Tantra and that of Universe and Maya. Demon Shumbha which represents our EGO names 8 types of demons to win over Good. These 8 types of demons in fact, signify the Ashtapasha which bind a person to Maya.

These 8 bondages have been reflected as 8 demon types in Saptshati and when Jiva invokes Mother Shakti, SHE fights these demons in us and breaks the bondages created by these Asuras and makes us free ...a Sadashiva !!

The Chief demon Shumbha (depicting our Ego) is dependent on 8 demons to win the war and he would cease to be powerful when his army is killed. Similarly Ego will cease to be once these 8 bondages are removed. Now let us look into details what these chains are.

1- ghR^iNA (hatred /aversion) : Hate is depicted by demon Udayudha. when Shumbha says 86 Udayudhas be ready, it tells us about the 86 types of hatreded which aid our Ego and keeps us away from divinity. Hatreded is a double edged sword. It not only forces us not to love someone it also nourishes our Ego telling it that it is better than the subject being hated. Ego can hate in 86 ways thus there are 86 Udayudha demons. Ten organs and Four Antakarnas, these fourteen generate hate towards four types of living beings (trees, reptiles/insects, animals and humans). Thus ego has total 56 types of hatreded in waking state. In dream state, organs are missing hence 4 antahkarnas generate this hate for 4 types of living beings....and in dreamless state ego has 10 organs and 4 anthakarans thus all total making 86 types of hatreded. These demons keep the ego satisfied and powerful. Mother shakti when evoked, kills these 86 hates and frees our Ego from one bondage called Hatreded.

2- Lajjaa (Shame) : This bondage has been depicted by Kambu demons. Kambu is also a word for Conch signifying the animal who hides behind the hard shell to protect himself from others. Here Shame or hiding oneself from one's weakness and keeping away from others to save one's self-respect. This is also a sort of bondage on the soul. Soul hides itself behind 6 bodies and 10 organs and 4 antahkarnas, hence making its number as 84. Here Durga Saptashati very bravely declares that these demons too are manifestations of Mother only, when it sings (in 5th chapter)

Yaa Devi sarva Bhuteshu Lajjaa rupen sansthitaa
Namastasaye namastasaye namstasaye namoh namah
(The Mother who manifests in all jiva as Lajja please accept my respects)

But to liberate ourselves into universal consciousness, this bondage has to be removed.

3- Bhaya (Fear) : This third bondage is depicted by demon Kautivirya. Fear of death, fear of losing respect or nears and dears keeps the ego busy in Maya and hinders its way towards greater awareness. Durga Saptashati says Kautivirya is numbered 50. 10 organs and 5 koshas of body are the place where fear is generated thus making the number 50 of Kautivirya demons.

4 - Shankaa (Doubt) : this fourth bondage is shown as Dhaumra demon. All the doubts arise due to distorted or false knowledge. Our 10 organs and 10 mahabhutas (earth, water, air, fire, ether - 5

in gross and 5 in subtle plane) are their solace hence Shumbha calls for 100 dhaumra demons to win the war.

Doubt keeps the ego busy thus keeping it entangled in Maya.

5- Jugupsa (censure/reproach/disgust) : When due to false knowledge we see others as different from us, we censure others to prove us right. This too is treated as fifth bondage of the Soul. they are also of 100 types as in above para.

6- kula (caste / attachment to a group based on activity) : Dauhadri demon denotes proud of being related to one's birth. Even after listening to Brahma Gyana many times, this bondage of birth pride does not leave us. Only Mother's kindness can kill this demon and free us from this chain. They are also of 100 types.

7 - Jaati (creed / attachment to a group based on birth) : Demon Kalkeya denotes it. Due to false knowledge, Jiva is proud of his body being special (e.g. human body, white or black) This bondage is very powerful and no theoretical knowledge of God can remove this. Human souls are re-born again and again mainly due to this bondage. They are also of 100 types

8- sheela (Modesty and good character) : This bondage is denoted by demon Maurya. The modesty means Nature of Jiva, an idea Jiva makes about himself and the universe during the course of his many births. This bondage is also called Rudra-Granthi. Even after attaining the higher stages of spirituality, one is not free from this bondage and only removal of this bondage one is established into Advaita (union with god).

An example of shri Ramakrishna paramhansa will further explain this bondage. When Guru Totapuri met paramhansa to teach him about Advaita, and asked him to sit in samadhi, shri Paramhansa saw Mother Kali only. Then guru Totapuri ordered paramhansa to take an imaginary sword and cut the throat of Mother Kali...Paramhansa was so fond of Mother Kali that he could not do it many times and finally when he did that, he was lost into Nirvikalpa samadhi a state of highest consciousness. So removal of this bondage is not easy. Only god or a god-sent guru can remove this final Bondage from Jiva.

Without removing these 8 bondages, Jiva can not know his real self. People may try to do many types of sadhna, but these sadhnas sometimes further strengthen the bondages. We have to remember one thing there that Moksha and bondages both are in fact imaginary. Getting out of bondages, one would find that there was nothing called Moksha or bondage and one was already free.

Then what is the way out to get ourselves free from these pashas? It is not easy to get rid of these Pashas.

In B.Geeta Bhagwan Krishna says :-

Vishaya vinivartantey nirahaarasya dehina (The abstemious embodied self, of course, keeps off sensible objects, but not necessarily the relish for them.)

Is it easy to remove these 8 chains (divided into 720 types) so easily? What is the way out then? YES there is one way. Complete surrender to the Mother. If we, like Paramhansa present our whole being to the Mother, we will see that these demons come forward and present themselves to the Mother for sacrifice on the altar of our Yajna of Bhakti and liberate our soul towards greater truths.

To begin with, we have first to leave our cunningness, selfishness and our false pride and surrender unconditionally to the Mother and request her to break our chains. Mother will not listen to our request if we first not purify ourselves . Lord Rama says in Ramcharitmanas.

Nirmal guni jan so mohi pawa
Mohi kapat chhal chhidra na bhava

Pious and purified souls reach me
Because I do not like cunningness, selfishness and pride

So let us begin today on the eve of Durga Ashtami with no prejudice...with no pride and with complete surrender...

Aum Krin Kalikaye namah
Hari Aum
by Jatinder pal Sandhu

It is really surprising that even modesty could be a hindrance to mukti.

To understand this you must remember the fact that Advaita posits a Nirguna Brahman (An attribute-less Brahman). Thus to realize an IDENTITY with The One that is "attribute-less" one has TO BE attribute-less; since as jlvAtmas we are bound in the guNas, we need to "emulate" nirguNa-hood!

That is why even a 'guna' like modesty or good character is an impediment!

It may be surprising but the example of Totapuri asking Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa to sever the head of Kali is encouraging him to renounce the last vestiges of saguna bhava worship which he was practicing. In Tantra the movement from saguna to nirguna for reaching Advaitic Oneness is done with shocking actions. Totapuri might have assessed Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's ripeness for jlvAnmukti which is possible only after you move on to nirguNa-brahman! So, he has given this "shock-treatment" for from the vantage point of aham-brahmasmi which is the jlvAnmukta's state no attributes are to be left. Aren't we talking about the distinction between knower-known-the process of knowing-knowledge.

by Sh. Mahadeva-Ji

dhyanam

om aruṇāṃ karuṇā-taraṅgi-tākṣīm

dhṛta pāsāṅ-kuśa bāṇa cāpa hastām |

aṇimādi-bhirā-vṛtām mayūkhair

ahamit-yeva vibhāvaye bhavānīm ||

om aiṃ hrīm klīm bhavāni caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

om namaścāṇḍikāyai

om ṛṣiruvāca || 1

caṇḍe ca nihate daitye muṇḍe ca vinipātite |
bahuleṣu ca sainyeṣu kṣa-yiteṣva sureśvaraḥ || 2

tataḥ kopa-parādhīna cetāḥ śumbhaḥ pratāpavān |
udyogaṃ sarva sainyānāṃ daityānāṃ ādideśa ha || 3

adya sarva balair daityāḥ śaḍa-śīti-rudāyudhāḥ |
kambūnāṃ catura-śītir niryāntu svabalair vṛtāḥ || 4

koṭi-vīryāṇi pañcāśad asurāṇāṃ kulāni vai |
śataṃ kulāni dhaumrāṇāṃ nirgacchantu mamā-jñayā || 5

kālakā daurhṛdā mauriyāḥ kāla-keyās tathāsurāḥ |
yudhāya sajjā niryāntu ājñayā tvaritā mama || 6

ityā-jñā-pyāsura-patiḥ śumbho bhairava-śāsanāḥ |
niṣagāma mahāsainya sahasrair bahuahir-vṛtāḥ || 7

āyāntaṃ caṇḍikā drṣṭvā tat sainyam atibhīṣaṇam |
jyā-svanaiḥ pūrayāmāsa dharaṇī-gaganān-taram || 8

tataḥ siṃho mahānāda-matīva kṛtavān nṛpa |
ghaṇṭā svanena tannādam ambikā copa-brṃhayat || 9

dhanurjyā siṃha ghaṇṭānāṃ nādā pūrta-dimukhā |
ninādair bhīṣaṇaiḥ kālī jigye vistā-ritānanā || 10

taṃ nināda-mupaśrutya daitya sainyai-ścaturdiśam |
devī siṃhas tathā kālī saroṣaiḥ parivāritāḥ || 11

etas-minan-tare bhūpa vināśāya suradviṣām |
bhavāyāmara siṃhānā-mativīrya balānvitāḥ || 12

brahmeśa guha viṣṇūnāṃ tathen-drasya ca śaktayaḥ |
śārīrebhyo viniṣkrāmya tadrūpaiś caṇḍikāṃ yayuḥ || 13

yasya devasya yadrūpaṃ yathā bhūṣaṇa-vāhanam |
tadva-deva hi tacchaktir asurān yoddhū-māyayau || 14

haṃsayukta vimānāgre sākṣa-sūtra kamaṇḍaluḥ |
āyātā brahmaṇaḥ śaktir brahmāṇī sābhidhīyate || 15

māheśvarī vṛṣā-rūḍhā trisūla varadhārīṇī |
mahāhivalayā prāptā candra rekhā-vibhūṣaṇā || 16

kaumārī śakti hastā ca mayūra vara-vāhanā |
yoddhūmabhya-yayau daityān ambikā guharūpiṇī || 17

tathaiva vaiṣṇavī śaktir garuḍopari samsthitā |
śāṅkhacakra gadā-śāṅga khaḍga-hastā-bhyupā-yayau || 18

yajña vārāha-matulam rūpaṃ yā bibhrato hareḥ |
śaktiḥ sāpyā-yayau tatra vārāhīm bibhratī tanum || 19

nārasimhī nṛsiṃh-asya bibhratī sadṛśaṃ vapuḥ |
prāptā tatra saṭa-kṣepa-kṣipta nakṣatra samhatih || 20

vajra-hastā tathai-vaindrī gajarājo-pari sthitā |
prāptā sahasra-nayanā yathā śakras tathaiva sā || 21

tataḥ pari-vṛtastābhir īśāno deva śaktibhiḥ |
hanyantām asurāḥ śīghraṃ mama prītyāha caṇḍikāṃ || 22

tato devī śarī·rāttu viniṣkrāntāti·bhīṣaṇā |
caṇḍikā śaktir atyugrā śivā śata·ninādinī || 23

sā cāha dhūmra·jaṭilam īśānam aparājitā |
dūta tvam gaccha bhagavan pārśvam śumbha niśumbhayoh || 24

brūhi śumbham niśumbham ca dānavāvati·garvitau |
ye cānye dānavās tatra yudhāya samupasthitāḥ || 25

trailokya·mindro labhatām devāḥ santu havir bhujaḥ |
yūyam prayāta pātālam yadi jīvitu·micchatha || 26

balāvale·pādatha ced bhavanto yudha·kāṅkṣiṇaḥ |
tadā gacchata tṛpyantu macchivāḥ piśitena vaḥ || 27

yato niyukto daityena tayā devyā śivaḥ svayam |
śivadūtīti loke'smiṃ·stataḥ sā khyāti·māgatā || 28

te'pi śrutvā vaco devyāḥ śarvā·khyātām mahāsurāḥ |
amarṣā·pūritā jagmur yatra kātyāyanī sthitā || 29

tataḥ prathamam evāgre śara śak·tyrṣṭi vrṣṭibhiḥ |
vavarṣurud dhatā·marṣās tāṃ devī mama·rārayaḥ || 30

sā ca tām prahitān bāṇāṃ chūla·śakti paraśvadhān |
ciccheda līlayādh·māta·dhanur·muktair·maheṣubhiḥ || 31

tasyā·gratas tathā kālī śūlapāta vidāritān |
khaṭvāṅga pothitām·ścārīn kurvatī vyacarat·tadā || 32

kamaṇḍalu jalā·kṣepa hata·vīryān hatau jasaḥ |
brahmāṇī cākaroc·chatrūn yena yena sma dhāvati || 33

māheśvarī trīśūlena tathā cakreṇa vaiṣṇavī |
daityāṃ jaghāna kaumārī tathā śak·tyāti·kopanā || 34

aindrī kuliśa·pātena śataśo daitya dānavāḥ |
petur·vidāritāḥ pṛthvyām rudhi·raugha·pravarṣiṇaḥ || 35

tuṇḍa·prahāra vidhvastā daṃṣṭrāgra kṣata·vakṣasaḥ |
vārāha mūrtyā nyapataṃ·ścakreṇa ca vidāritāḥ || 36

nakhair·vidāri·tām·ścānyān bhakṣayantī mahāsurān |
nārasimhī cacārājau nādāpūrṇa digambarā || 37

caṇḍaṭ·ṭahāsai·rasurāḥ śiva dūtyabhi dūṣitāḥ |
petuḥ pṛthivyām patitām·stām·ścakhā·dātha sā tadā || 38

iti mātṛgaṇam krudham marda·yantaṃ mahāsurān |
drṣṭvā bhyu·pāyair vividhair neśur·devā·risai·nikāḥ || 39

palāyana·parān drṣṭvā daityān mātṛ gaṇārditān |
yodhu·mabhya·yayau krudho raktabījo mahāsuraḥ || 40

raktabindur yadā bhūmau patat·yasya śarīrataḥ |
samut·patati medinyām tat pramāṇas tadāsuraḥ || 41

yuyudhe sa gadā pāṇir indra śaktyā mahāsuraḥ |
tata·ścaindrī sva·vajreṇa raktabīja·matāḍayat || 42

kuliśenā·hatasyāśu bahu susrāva śoṇitam |
samuttas·thus tato yodhās tadrūpās·tat parākramāḥ || 43

yāvantaḥ pati tās·tasya śarīrād rakta bindavaḥ |
tāvantaḥ puruṣā jātās tadvīrya bala·vikramāḥ || 44

te cāpi yuyudhus tatra puruṣā rakta sambhavāḥ |
samaṃ mātṛbhir atyugra śastra pātāti bhīṣaṇam || 45

punaśca vajra pātena kṣatamasya śiro yadā |
vavāha raktaṃ puruṣās tato jātāḥ sahasraśaḥ || 46

vaiṣṇavī samare cainaṃ cakreṇābhi jaghāna ha |
gadayā tāḍayāmāsa aindrī tama·sureśvaram || 47

vaiṣṇavī cakrabhinnasya rudhira-srāva sambhavaḥ |
sahasraśo jagad-vyāptam tat-pramāṇair mahāsuraḥ || 48

śaktyā jaghāna kaumārī vārāhī ca tathāsinā |
māheśvarī trīsūlena raktabījaḥ mahāsuraḥ || 49

sa cāpi gadayā daityaḥ sarvā evāhanat prṭhak |
mātrīḥ kopa samā-viṣṭo raktabījo mahāsuraḥ || 50

tasyā-hatasya bahudhā śakti-sūlādi-bhir bhuvi |
papāta yo vai raktau ghas-tenāsañ chataśo'surāḥ || 51

taś cāsurā srksam-bhūtair asuraiḥ sakalam jagat |
vyāptam āsīt tato devā bhayamā-jagmur-uttamam || 52

tān viṣaṇṇān surān drṣṭvā caṇḍikā prāha satvarā |
uvāca kālīm cāmuṇḍe vistīrṇaḥ vadanaḥ kuru || 53

macchastra pāta sambhūtān rakta-bindhūn mahāsuraṇ |
raktabindoḥ pratīccha tvaṁ vaktre-ṇānena veginā || 54

bhakṣayantī cara raṇe tadut-pannān mahāsuraṇ |
evameṣa kṣayaḥ daityaḥ kṣīṇa-rakto gamiṣyati || 55

bhakṣya-māṇās tvayā cogrā nacot-pat-syanti cāpare |
ityuktvā tāṁ tato devī sūlenābhi jaghāna tam || 56

mukhena kālī jagrhe raktabīja-sya śoṇitam |
tato'sāvā-jaghānātha gadayā tatra caṇḍikāḥ || 57

na cāsyā vedanāḥ cakre gadāpātol-pikāmapī |
tasyā-hatasya dehāttu bahu susrāva śoṇitam || 58

yatas tatas tad vaktreṇa cāmuṇḍā sam-pratīcchati |
mukhe samud-gatā ye'syā rakta-pātān mahāsuraḥ || 59

tāṁ-śca khādātha cāmuṇḍā papau tasya ca śoṇitam |
devī sūlena vajreṇa bāṇai-rasibhir ṛṣṭibhiḥ || 60

jaghāna raktabījaḥ tam cāmuṇḍā-pīta śoṇitam |
sapapāta mahīprṣṭhe śastra saṅgha samāhataḥ || 61

nīraktaśca mahīpāla raktabījo mahāsuraḥ |
tataste harṣa-matulam avāpus-tridaśā nrpa || 62

teṣāṁ mātrgaṇo jāto nanartāsṛṇ madoddhataḥ || 63

om

chapter 9



The Slaying of Nishumbha

Nishumbha represents the attachment (mamata) to body, mind, possessions, family and social roles, group affiliations, identity and beliefs too, among other adjuncts (upadhis). Nishumbha represents the attachment to all its objective attributes; the concept of 'me', 'mine', 'my' children, spouse, or family. This sense of attachment leads to the misidentification of the true Self.

dhyānam

om bandhū kakāñcana nibhaṃ ruci-rākṣa mālāṃ
 pāśāṇ-kuśau ca varadāṃ nijabāhu-daṇḍaiḥ |
 bibhrāṇa-mindu śakalā bharaṇaṃ trinētram
 ardhāmbike śamaniśaṃ vapurā-śrayāmi ||

om aiṃ hrīṃ klīṃ ardhāmbika caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

om namaścaṇḍikāyai

om rājovāca || 1

vicitramida·mākhyātaṃ bhagavan bhavatā mama |
devyāś carita mātmyaṃ raktabīja vadhāśritam || 2

bhūyaścec chāmyaham śrotuṃ raktabīje nipātite |
cakāra śumbho yatkarma niśumbhaś cāti kopanaḥ || 3

ṛṣiruvāca || 4

cakāra kopa·matulaṃ raktabīje nipātite |
śumbhāśuro niśumbhaśca hateṣvanyeṣu cāhave || 5

hanyamānaṃ mahāsainyaṃ vilokyā·marṣa·mudvahan |
abhya·dhāvan·niśumbho'tha mukhya·yāsura senayā || 6

tasyāgratas tathā prṣṭe pārśva·yośca mahāsurāḥ |
saṃdaṣ·tauṣṭha puṭāḥ krudhā hantuṃ devī·mupāyayuh || 7

ājagāma mahāvīryaḥ śumbho'pi svabalair vṛtaḥ |
nihantuṃ caṇḍikām kopāt kṛtvā yudhaṃ tu mātṛbhiḥ || 8

tato yudha·matīvāsīd devyā śumbha niśumbhayoḥ |
śaravarṣa·matī·vograṃ megha·yoriva varṣatoḥ || 9

cicche·dāstāñ·charāṃ·stābhyāṃ caṇḍikā svaśarot karaiḥ |
tāḍayāmāsa cāṅgeṣu śastrauḡhai·rasureśvarau || 10

niśumbho niśitaṃ khaḍgaṃ carma cādāya suprabham |
atā·ḍayan·mūrdhni siṃhaṃ devyā vāhanamuttamam || 11

tāḍite vāhane devī kṣura·preṇāsimmuttamam |
niśumbhas·yāśu ciccheda carma cāpyaṣṭa candrakam || 12

chinne carmaṇi khaḍge ca śaktiṃ cikṣepa so'suraḥ |
tāmapyasya dvidhā cakre cakre·ṇābhi·mukhā·gatām || 13

kopādh·māto niśumbho'tha śūlaṃ jagrāha dānavaḥ |
āyātaṃ muṣṭi·pātena devī taccāpya cūrṇayat || 14

āvidhyātha gadāṃ so'pi cikṣepa caṇḍikām prati |
sāpi devyā trisūlena bhinnā bhasma·tvamāgatā || 15

tataḥ paraśu·hastanta·māyāntaṃ daitya·puṅgavam |
āhatya devī bāṇaḡhair·apātayata bhūtale || 16

tasmin nipatite bhūmau niśumbhe bhīma·vikrame |
bhrātar·yatīva saṃkrudhaḥ prayayau hantum ambikām || 17

sa rathas·thas tathāt yuccair grhīta·paramā·yudhaiḥ |
bhujair aṣṭābhir atulair vyāpyā·śeṣaṃ babhau nabhaḥ || 18

tamāyāntaṃ samālokya devī śaṅkha·mavādayat |
jyā·śabdaṃ cāpi dhanuṣaś cakārātīva duḥsaham || 19

pūrayāmāsa kakubho nija·ghaṇṭā svanena ca |
samasta daitya sainyaṇaṃ tejo vadhā·vidhāyinā || 20

tataḥ siṃho mahānādais tyājitebha mahāmadaḥ |
pūrayāmāsa gaganam gāṃ tathaiva diśo daśa || 21

tataḥ kālī samut·patya gaganam kṣmā·matāḍayat |
karābhyāṃ tanni nādena prākṣva·nāste tirohitāḥ || 22

aṭṭat·ṭahāsa·maśivaṃ śivadūtī cakāra ha |
taiḥ śabdai·rasurās·tresuh śumbhaḥ kopaṃ paraṃ yayau || 23

durātmaṃ stiṣṭha tiṣṭheti vyājahā·rāmbikā yadā |
tadā jayetya·bhihitam devai·rākāśa saṃsthitaiḥ || 24

śumbhenā·gatya yā śaktir muktā jvālāti·bhīṣaṇā |
āyāntī vahni kūṭābhā sā nirastā maholkayā || 25

siṃhanādena śumbhasya vyāptaṃ loka·trayān·taram |
nirghātaniḥ svano ghoro jitavāna vanīpate || 26

śumbha muktāñ charāṇdevī śumbhastat prahitāñ charāñ |
ciccheda svaśarai·rugraiḥ śataśo'tha sahasraśaḥ || 27

tataḥ sā caṇḍikā krudhā śūlenābhi jaghāna taṃ |
sa tadā·bhihato bhūmau mūrcchito nipapāta ha || 28

tato niśumbhaḥ sampṛāpya cetanā·mātta kārmukaḥ |
ājaghāna śarair devīm kālīm kesarīṇaṃ tathā || 29

punaśca kṛtvā bāhūnā·mayutaṃ danujeśvaraḥ |
cakrā·yudhena ditijaś chādayāmāsa caṇḍikām || 30

tato bhagavatī krudhā durgā durgārti nāśinī |
ciccheda tāni cakrāñi svaśaraiḥ sāyakāṃśca tāt || 31

tato niśumbho vegena gadāmādāya caṇḍikām |
abhya·dhāvata vai hantuṃ daitya·senā samāvṛtaḥ || 32

tasyā·patata evāśu gadāṃ ciccheda caṇḍikā |
khaḍgena śita·dhāreṇa sa ca śūlaṃ samādade || 33

śūla hastam samāyāntaṃ niśumbha·mamarārdanam |
hṛdi vivyādha śūlena vegā·viddhena caṇḍikā || 34

bhinnasya tasya śūlena hṛdayān niḥsrto'paraḥ |
mahābalo mahāvīryas tiṣṭheti puruṣo vadan || 35

tasya niṣkrāmato devī prahasya svanavat tataḥ |
śiraś·ciccheda khaḍgena tato'sāvapatad·bhuvī || 36

tataḥ siṃhaś cakhā·dograṃ daṃṣṭrāk·ṣuṇṇa śirodharān |
asurāṃ·stāṃs·tathā kālī śivadūtī tathā parān || 37

kaumārī śakti nirbhinnāḥ kecin neśur mahāsurāḥ |
brahmāṇī mantra pūtena toyenānye nirākṛtāḥ || 38

māheśvarī trīśūlena bhinnāḥ petu·stathāpare |
vārāhi tuṇḍa ghātena kecic cūrṇī·kṛtā bhuvī || 39

khaṇḍaṃ khaṇḍaṃ ca cakreṇa vaiṣṇavyā dānavāḥ kṛtāḥ |
vajreṇa caindrī hastāgra vimuktena tathāpare || 40

kecid vine·śurasurāḥ kecinnaṣṭā mahāhavāt |
bhakṣitā ścāpare kālī śivadūtī mṛgādhipaiḥ || 41

om

chapter 10

The Slaying of Shumbha

Shumbha denotes the ego, the false sense of self, the limited self. The Self (Atman) is not the same as non-self (anatman). It is ignorance that gives rise to the mistaken identify that the non-self is identical to the Self. Devi kills by piercing the asura with Her spear of knowledge (gnana). The death of the limited ego leads to the relinquishing of a limited identity, and gaining the realisation of the true Self.

dhyanam

om uttap·tahema rucirāṃ ravi candra vaḥni
nētrāṃ dhanuś śara·yutāṃ kuśa pāśa śūlam |
ramyair bhujaīśca dadhatīṃ śiva śakti rūpāṃ
kāmeśvarīṃ hṛdi·bhajāmi dhṛten·dulekhām ||

om aiṃ hrīṃ klīṃ kāmeśvarī caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

om namaścaṇḍikāyai

om ṛṣiruvāca || 1

niśumbhaṃ nihataṃ dr̥ṣṭvā bhrātaraṃ prāṇa-sammitam |
hanyamānaṃ balaṃ caiva śumbhaḥ krudho'bravīd vacaḥ || 2

balāvalepād duṣṭe tvaṃ mā durge garvamāvaha |
anyāsāṃ balamā-śritya yuddhyase yāti-māninī || 3

devyuvāca || 4

ekaivāhaṃ jagat-yatra dvitīyā kā mamāparā |
paśyaitā duṣṭa mayyeva viśantyo madvibhūtayaḥ || 5

tataḥ samastā-stā devyo brahmāṇī-pramukhā layam |
tasyā devyās tanau jagmur ekaivāsīt tadāmbikā || 6

devyuvāca || 7

ahaṃ vibhūtyā bahubhir iha rūpair yadā sthitā |
tat samhr̥taṃ mayaikaiva tiṣṭhām-yājau sthīro bhava || 8

ṛṣiruvāca || 9

tataḥ pravavṛte yuddhaṃ devyāḥ śumbhasya cobhayoḥ |
paśyatāṃ sarva devānām asuraṇām ca dāruṇam || 10

śaravarṣaiḥ śitaiḥ śastrais tathā straiś-caiva dāruṇaiḥ |
tayor yuddha mabhūdhūyaḥ sarva loka-bhayaṅkaram || 11

divyān-yastrāṇi śataśo mumuce yān-yathāmbikā |
babhaṇja tāni daityendras tatpratighāta kartṛbhiḥ || 12

muktānī tena cāstrāṇi divyāni parameśvarī |
babhaṇja līlayai-vogra huṅkāroc cāraṇā-dibhiḥ || 13

tataḥ śara-śatair devī-mācchā dayata so'suraḥ |
sāpi tat kupitā devī dhanuś ciccheda ceṣubhiḥ || 14

chinne dhanuṣi daityendras tathā śakti-mathādade |
ciccheda devī cakreṇa tāmap-yasya kare-sthitām || 15

tataḥ khaḍga-mupādāya śatacandraṃ ca bhānumat |
abhya-dhāvat tadā devīm daityānām adhipeśvaraḥ || 16

tasyāpatata evāśu khaḍgaṃ ciccheda caṇḍikā |
dhanurmuktaiḥ śitair bāṇaiścarma cārka karāmalam || 17

hatāśvaḥ sa tadā daityaś chinna-dhanvā visārathiḥ |
jagrāha mudgaraṃ ghora-mambikā nidhanod-yataḥ || 18

cicchedā patatas tasya mudgaraṃ niśitaiḥ śaraiḥ |
tathāpi so'bhya-dhāvattām muṣṭi-mudyamya vegavān || 19

sa muṣṭiṃ pātayāmāsa hr̥daye daitya puṅgavaḥ |
devyāstaṃ cāpi sā devī taleno-rasya tāḍayat || 20

tala-prahārā-bhihato nipapāta mahītale |
sa daitya rājaḥ sahasā punareva tathot-thitaḥ || 21

utpatya ca pragṛhyocair devīm gaga-namā-sthitaḥ |
tatrāpi sā nirādhārā yuyudhe tena caṇḍikā || 22

niyuddhaṃ khe tadā daitya-ścaṇḍikā ca parasparam |
cakratuḥ prathamam sidha-muni-vismaya kārakam || 23

tato niyuddhaṃ suciraṃ kṛtvā tenāmbikā saha |
utpātya bhrāmayā māsa cikṣepa dharaṇītale || 24

sa kṣipto dharaṇīm prāpya muṣṭi-mudyamya vegitaḥ |
abhya-dhāvata duṣṭātmā caṇḍikā nidhanec chayā || 25

tamāyāntaṃ tato devī sarva daitya janeśvaraṃ |
jagatyām pātayāmāsa bhittvā śūlena vakṣasi || 26

sa gatāsuḥ papātorvyāṃ devī śūlā-gravikṣataḥ |
cālayan sakalāṃ pṛthvīm sābdhi dvīpāṃ saparvatām || 27

tataḥ prasanna-makhilāṃ hate tasmin durātmani |
jagat svāsthya-matīvāpa nirmalaṃ cābhavan-nabhaḥ || 28

utpā-tameghāḥ solkā ye prāgāsamste śamaṃ yayuḥ |
sarito mārga vāhinyas tathā samstatra pātite || 29

tato devagaṇāḥ sarve harṣa-nirbhara mānasāḥ |
babhūvur-nihate tasmin gandharvā laliṭaṃ jaguḥ || 30

avādayaṃ-stathai-vānye nanṛtu-ścāpsaro gaṇāḥ |
vavuḥ puṇyā-stathā vātāḥ suprabho'bhūd-divākaraḥ || 31

jajvalu-ścā-gnayaḥ śāntāḥ śāntā digjani-tas-vanāḥ || 32

om

chapter 11

dhyaṇam

oṃ bālāra·vidyutim indu kirīṭāṃ
tuṅga·kucāṃ nayanatra·yayuk·tām |
smera·mukhīṃ varadāṅ·kuśa·pāsā bhīti·karāṃ
prabhaje bhuvaneśīm ||

oṃ aiṃ hrīṃ klīṃ bhuvaneśvarī caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

om namaścāṇḍikāyai

om ṛṣi ruvāca || 1

devyā hate tattra mahāsurendre
sendrāḥ surā vaḥni puroga-māstām |
kātyāyanīm tuṣṭu-vuriṣṭa lābhād
vikāsi vaktrāb javikāśi tāsāḥ || 2

devi prapannārti hare prasīda
prasīda mātār jagato'kḥilasya |
prasīda viśveśvari pāhi viśvaṃ
tvamīśvarī devi carācarasya || 3

ādhārabhūtā jagatas tvamekā
mahī-svarūpeṇa yataḥ sthitāsi |
apāṃ svarūpa sthitayā tvayaitad-
āpyāyate kṛtsna-malaṅg-hyavīrye || 4

siddha mantra to obtain moksha, salvation

tvam vaiṣṇavī śaktir anantavīryā
viśvasya bījaṃ paramāsi māyā |
sammohitaṃ devi samastametad
tvam vai prasannā bhuvī mukti hetuḥ || 5

siddha mantra to obtain all skills and motherly affection

vidyāḥ samastāstava devi bhedāḥ
striyaḥ samastāḥ sakalā jagatsu |
tvayaikayā pūrīta-mambayaitat
kā te stutiḥ stavyaparā paroktiḥ || 6

siddha mantra to obtain salvation and heaven

sarvabhūtā yadā devī svarga mukti pradāyini |
tvam stutā stutaye kā vā bhavantu paramoktayaḥ || 7

siddha mantra to obtain deliverance and heaven

sarvasya buddhi-rūpeṇa janasya hr̥di samstḥite |
svargā pavargade devi nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 8

kalākāṣṭhādi rūpeṇa pariṇāma pradāyini |
viśvasyo paratau śakte nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 9

arati hymn (DM11.10.12)

siddha mantra to obtain all around well being

sarva maṅgala māṅgalye śive sarvārtha sādḥike |
śaraṇye tryambake gauri nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 10

siddha mantra to obtain strength

sr̥ṣṭi-stḥiti-vināśānāṃ śaktibhūte sanātani |
guṇāśraye guṇamaye nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 11

siddha mantra to eliminate personal calamity

śaraṇāgata dīnārta paritrāṇa parāyaṇe |
sarvas-yārti hare devi nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 12

the 9 Shaktis (as different forms of Nārāyaṇi) who fought the demons

haṃsayukta vimānasṭhe brahmāṇī rūpa dhāriṇi |
kauśāmbhaḥ-kṣarīke devi nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 13

triśūla candrāhidhare mahāvṛṣabha vāhini |
māheśvarī-śvarūpeṇa nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 14

mayūra kuk-kuṭavṛte mahāśakti dhare'naghe |
kaumārī-rūpa samsthāne nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 15

śaṅkha cakra gadā śārṅga gr̥hīta paramāyudhe |
prasīda vaiṣṇavī rūpe nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 16

gr̥hītogra mahācakre daṃṣṭrod-dhṛta vasuṃ-dhare |
varāha-rūpiṇī śive nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 17

nṛsiṃha·rūpeṇogreṇa hantum daityān kṛtodyame |
trailokya trāṇa sahite nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 18

kirīṭini mahāvajre sahasra nayanojjvale |
vṛtra prāṇa hare caindri nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 19

śivadūtī svarūpeṇa hata daitya mahābale |
ghorarūpe mahārāve nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 20

damṣṭrā karāla·vadane śiro mālā vibhūṣaṇe |
cāmunḍe munḍa mathane nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 21

lakṣmi lajje mahāvidye śrad dhe puṣṭi svadhe dhruve |
mahārātri mahāmāye nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 22

medhe sarasvati vare bhūti bābhravi tāmasi |
niyate tvam prasīdeṣe nārāyaṇi namo'stu te || 23

siddha mantra for protection (protect us from danger)

sarva svarūpe sarveṣe sarvaśakti samanvite |
bhaye·bhyastrāhi no devi durge devi namo'stu te || 24

siddha mantra for protection (protect us from ghosts)

etatte vadanaṃ saumyaṃ locana traya·bhūṣitam |
pātu naḥ sarva·bhīti·bhyaḥ kātyāyani namo'stu te || 25

siddha mantra for protection (protect us from danger)

jvālā·karāla·matyugra·maśeṣāsura sūdanam |
triśūlaṃ pātu no bhīter bhadrakālī namo'stu te || 26

siddha mantra for protection

- by following the procedures of Durga Dipadana and chanting the Shloka 'Hinasti daitya tejaamsi' accompanied with the ringing of the bell (ghaṇṭa vAdana), all evil spirits are destroyed.

hinasti daitya tejāmsi svanenā·pūrya yā jagat |
sā ghaṇṭā pātu no devi pāpebhyo naḥ sutāniva || 27

asurā·sṛg vasāpaṅka carci·taste karojjvalaḥ |
śubhāya khaḍgo bhavatu caṇḍike tvam natā vayam || 28

siddha mantra to eliminate personal illness.

rogānaśeṣā napahaṃsi tuṣṭā
ruṣṭā tu kāmān sakalān abhīṣṭān |
tvāmā·śritānāṃ na vipanna·rāṇāṃ
tvāmā·śritā hyā·śrayatāṃ prayānti || 29

etat kṛtaṃ yat kadanam tvayādya
dharma dviṣāṃ devi mahāsurāṇām |
rūpai·ranekair bahu·dhātma mūrtiṃ
kṛtvāmbike tat prakaroti kānyā || 30

vidyāsu śāstreṣu vivekadīpe-
ṣvād·yeṣu vākyeṣu ca kā tvadanyā |
mamatva·gar te'ti·mahān·dhakāre
vibhrā·mayat·ye tadaṭīva viśvam || 31

siddha mantra to be safe from all turmoils (demons, serpents of poison, enemies)

rakṣāṃsi yatro graviṣāśca nāgā
yatrā·rayo dasyubalāni yatra |
dāvānalo yatra tathāb·dhimadye
tatra sthitā tvam paripāsi viśvam || 32

viśveśvari tvam paripāsi viśvaṃ
viśvāt·mikā dhārāya·sīti viśvam |
viśveśa·vandyā bhavatī bhavanti
viśvā·śrayāye tvayi bhakti namrāḥ || 33

devi prasida paripālāya no'ribhiter-
nityaṃ yaṭhā·sura vadhā·dadhu·naiva sadyaḥ |
pāpāni sarva jagatāṃ praśamaṃ nayāśu
utpāta·pāka janitāṃśca mahopasaṃgān || 34

siddha mantra to obtain happiness

praṇatānāṃ prasīda tvaṃ devi viśvārti-hārini |
trailokya vāsinā mīḍye lokānāṃ varadā bhava || 35

devyuvāca || 36

varadāhaṃ surāgaṇā varam yanmana sec-chatha |
taṃ vr̥ṇudhvaṃ prayacchāmi jagatā-mupakārakam || 37

devāūcuḥ || 38

siddha mantra to pacification of miseries in the triple world and destruction of our enemies

sarvā bādhā praśamanam trailokya-syā-khileśvari |
evameva tvayā kārya-masmad vairi-vināśanam || 39

devyuvāca || 40

vaivas-vate'ntare prāpte aṣṭā viṃśatime yuge |
śumbho niśumbhaś-cai-vānyā-vutpat-syete mahāsurau || 41

nanda gopa gr̥he jātā yaśodā garbha sambhavā |
tatastau nāśa-yiṣyāmi vindhyā-cala-nivāsinī || 42

punarapyati-raudreṇa rūpeṇa pṛthivītale |
avatīrya hani-ṣyāmi vaipra-cittāṃstu dānavān || 43

bhakṣa-yantyā-śca tānugrān vaipracittān mahāsurān |
raktā dantā bhaviṣyanti dāḍimīku-sumopamāḥ || 44

tato māṃ devatāḥ sarge martyaloke ca mānavāḥ |
stuvanto vyāhari-ṣyanti satataṃ rakta dantikām || 45

bhūyaśca śatavār-ṣikyā-manā vr̥ṣṭyā-manam-bhasi |
muniभिḥ samstutā bhūmau sambhava-viṣyāmya yonijā || 46

tataḥ śatena netrāṇāṃ nirīk-ṣiṣyāmi yanmunīn |
kīrta-yiṣyanti manujāḥ śatākṣīmiti māṃ tataḥ || 47

tato'hamakhilam lokam ātmadeha samud-bhavaiḥ |
bhari-ṣyāmi surāḥ śākair āvr̥ṣṭeḥ prāṇa-dhārakaiḥ || 48

śākambharīti vikhyātiṃ tadā yāsyām-yahaṃ bhuvi |
tatraiva ca vadhī-ṣyāmi durgamākhyam mahāsuram || 49

durgā devīti vikhyātam tanme nāma bhaviṣyati |
puna-ścāhaṃ yadā bhīmaṃ rūpaṃ kṛtvā himācale || 50

rakṣāṃsi bhakṣa-yiṣyāmi munīnāṃ trāṇa-kāraṇāt |
tadā māṃ munayaḥ sarve stoṣyantyā namra mūrtayaḥ || 51

bhīmā devīti vikhyātam tanme nāma bhaviṣyati |
yadāruṇā-khyas trailokye mahābādhāṃ kariṣyati || 52

tadāhaṃ bhrāmaram rūpaṃ kṛtvā-saṅkhye-yaṣaṭ-padam |
trailokya-sya hitārthāya vadhī-ṣyāmi mahāsuram || 53

bhrāmarīti ca māṃ lokāstadā stoṣyanti sarvataḥ |
itthaṃ yadā yadā bādhā dānavotthā bhaviṣyati || 54

tadā tadā vatīr-yāhaṃ kariṣyām-yari samkṣayam || 55

om

chapter 12

The Devi said, “With a concentrated mind, whoever shall pray to me constantly with these hymns, I shall without doubt put an end to all his troubles. Whoever extols my deeds relating to the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha, the killing of Mahishasura and likewise the slaughter of Shumbha and Nishumbha, whoever listens devotedly with a focused mind, to my glories sung in this Mahatmyam, on the eighth, the fourteenth and on the ninth days of the fortnight, to them nothing bad shall happen, nor calamities that arise from wrong doings nor poverty nor separation from beloved ones. Neither fear from enemies, robbers, kings, nor from weapons, fire and floods. Hence this, my Mahatmyam, must be chanted by those of concentrated minds and listened to constantly with devotion, for it is the supreme way to well-being”.

dhyanam

om vidyud dāmasamaprabhāṃ mṛgapati skandhasṭhitāṃ bhīṣaṇāṃ
 kanyābhiḥ karavālakheṭa vilasad-dhastābhirā sevitām |
 hastaiścakragadāsi kheṭa viśikhāṃścāpaṃ guṇaṃ
 tarjanīm bibhrāṇāmanalātmikāṃ śasīdharāṃ durgāṃ
 trinetrāṃ bhaje ||

om aiṃ hrīm klīm agni durgā caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

om namaścāṇḍikāyai

om devyuvāca || 1

ebhiḥ stavaiśca māṃ nityaṃ stoṣyate yaḥ samāhitaḥ |
tasyāhaṃ sakalāṃ bādhāṃ nāśa-yiṣyāmya saṃśayam || 2

madhu kaiṭabha nāśaṃ ca mahiṣāśura ghātanam |
kīrta-yiṣyanti ye tadvad vadhāṃ śumbha niśumbhayoḥ || 3

aṣṭamyāṃ ca caturdaśyāṃ navamyāṃ caikacetasaḥ |
śroṣyanti caiva ye bhaktyā mama mātātmya-muttamam || 4

na teṣāṃ duṣkṛtaṃ kiñcid duṣkṛtot-thā nacāpadaḥ |
bhaviṣyati nadāridryaṃ na caiveṣṭa viyojanam || 5

śatruto nabhayaṃ tasya dasyuto vā narājataḥ |
na śāstrānala-toyau-ghāt kadācit sambhaviṣyati || 6

tasmān mamai tan-mātātmyaṃ paṭhi-tavyaṃ samāhitaiḥ |
śrotavyaṃ ca sadā bhaktyā paraṃ svastya-yaṇaṃ hi tat || 7

upasargāna-śeṣāṃstu mahāmāri samudbhavān |
tathā trividha-mutpātaṃ mātātmyaṃ śama-yenmama || 8

yatraitat paṭhyate samyaṅ nitya-māyatane mama |
sadā natadvi-mokṣyāmi sāmniḍhyaṃ tatra me sthitam || 9

bali pradāne pūjāyāṃ agni-kārye mahotsave |
sarvaṃ mamaitac-caritam uccāryaṃ śrāvya meva ca || 10

jānatā-jānatā vāpi bali pūjāṃ tathā kṛtām |
pratīc-chiṣyā-myahaṃ prītyā vaḥni homaṃ tathā kṛtam || 11

śaratkāle mahāpūjā kriyate yā ca vārṣikī |
tasyāṃ mamai tan mātātmyaṃ śrutvā bhakti samanvitaḥ || 12

siddha mantra to obtain wealth and progeny; over riding all obstacles

sarvā bādhā vinir mukto dhana-dhānya sutānvitaḥ |
manuṣyo mat-prasādena bhaviṣyati nasaṃśayaḥ || 13

śrutvā mamaitan mātātmyaṃ tathā cotpattayaḥ śubhāḥ |
parā kramaṃ ca yuddheṣu jāyate nirbhayaḥ pumān || 14

ripavaḥ saṃkṣayaṃ yānti kalyāṇaṃ copa-padyate |
nandate ca kulaṃ puṃsāṃ mātātmyaṃ mama śṛṇvatām || 15

śānti karmaṇi sarvatra tathā duḥsvapna darśane |
graha-pīḌāsu cogrāsu mātātmyaṃ śṛṇu yānmama || 16

upasargāḥ śamaṃ yānti graha-pīḌāśca dāruṇāḥ |
duḥsvapnaṃ ca nṛbhīr-drṣṭaṃ su-svapna-mupajāyate || 17

bāla-grahābhi bhūtānāṃ bālānāṃ śānti kārākam |
saṃghā-tabhede ca nṛṇāṃ maitrī karaṇa-muttamam || 18

durvṛt-tānā-maśeṣāṇāṃ balahāni-karaṃ param |
rakṣo-bhūta piśācānāṃ paṭhanā-deva nāśanam || 19

sarvaṃ mamaitan mātātmyaṃ mama sannidhi kārakam |
paśu-puṣpār-ghya-dhūpaiśca gandha dīpais tathot-tamaiḥ || 20

viprāṇāṃ bhojanair-homaiḥ prokṣa-ṇīyair-aharniśam |
anyaiśca vivi-dhair-bhogaiḥ pradānair-vatsareṇa yā || 21

prītirme kriyate sāsmin sakṛt sucarite śrute |
śrutam harati pāpāni tathā-rogyaṃ prayacchati || 22

rakṣāṃ karoti bhūte-bhoyo janmanāṃ kīrtanaṃ mama |
yuddheṣu caritaṃ yanme duṣṭa-daitya nibar-haṇam || 23

tasmiñ-chrute vairi-kṛtaṃ bhayaṃ puṃsāṃ na jāyate |
yuṣmābhiḥ stutayo yāśca yāśca brahmar-ṣibhiḥ kṛtāḥ || 24

brahmaṇā ca kṛtās·tāstu prayacchanti śubhām matim |
araṇye prāntare vāpi dāvāgni pari·vāritaḥ || 25

dasyu·bhīrvā vṛtaḥ śūnye gṛhīto vāpi śatrubhiḥ |
siṃhav·yāghrānu·yāto vā vane vā vana·hastibhiḥ || 26

rājñā krudhena cājñapto vadhyo bandha gato'pi vā |
āghūrṇito vā vātena sthitaḥ pote mahārṇave || 27

patatsu cāpi śastreṣu saṃgrāme bhṛśa·dāruṇe |
sarvā·bādhāsu ghorāsu vedanā·bhyar·dito'pi vā || 28

smaran mamaitac caritaṃ naro mucyeta saṅkaṭāt |
mama prabhāvāt siṃhādya dasyavo vairiṇas·tathā || 29

dūrādeva palāyante smarataś·caritaṃ mama || 30

ṛṣi ruvāca || 31

ityuktvā sā bhagavatī caṇḍikā caṇḍa vikramā || 32

paśyatāmeva devānām tatrai·vāntara·dhīyata |
te'pi devā nirātaṅkāḥ svādhikāṇ yathā purā || 33

yajña bhāga·bhujāḥ sarve cakrur vinihatā·rayaḥ |
daityāśca devyā nihate śumbhe devaripau yudhi || 34

jagad vidhvaṃ·sini tasmin mahogre'tula·vikrame |
niśumbhe ca mahāvīrye śeṣāḥ pātālamā·yayuh || 35

evam bhagavatī devī sā nityāpi punaḥ punaḥ |
sambhūya kurute bhūpa jagataḥ paipālanam || 36

tayaitan·mohyate viśvaṃ saiva viśvaṃ prasūyate |
sā yācitā ca vijñānaṃ tuṣṭā rdhīm prayacchati || 37

vyāptaṃ tayaitat sakalaṃ brahmāṇḍaṃ manujeśvara |
mahākālyā mahākāle mahāmārī svarūpayā || 38

saiva kāle mahāmārī saiva sṛṣṭir bhavat·yajā |
sthitim karoti bhūtānām saiva kāle sanātānī || 39

bhavakāle nr̥ṇām saiva lakṣmīr vṛddhi·pradā gr̥he |
saivā bhāve tathā·lakṣmīr vināśāyo·pajāyate || 40

stutā sampūjitā puṣpair dhūpa gandhā·dibhis tathā |
dadāti vittaṃ putrāṃśca matim dharme gatiṃ śubhām || 41

om



chapter 13

dhyanam

om bālār·kamaṇḍalā·bhāsām
caturbāhuṃ trilocanām |
pāśāṅ·kuśavarā·bhītīr
dhārayantīm śivām bhaje ||

om aiṃ hrīṃ klīm śivā dharikā parameśvarī śrī vidyā saptaśatī
caṇḍikāye vicce namaḥ

om namaścaṇḍikāyai

om ṛṣiruvāca || 1

etat te kathitaṃ bhūpa devī mähātmya muttamam || 2

evaṃ prabhāvā sā devī yayedam dhāryate jagat |
vidyā tathaiva kriyate bhagavad viṣṇu māyayā || 3

tayā tvameṣa vaiśyaśca tathai vānye vivekinaḥ |
mohyante mohitā ścaiva mohame śyanti cāpare || 4

tāmu paihi mahārāja śaraṇaṃ parameśvarīm |
ārādhitā saiva nṛṇāṃ bhoga svargā pavargadā || 5

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca || 6

iti tasya vacaḥ śrutvā surathaḥ sa narādhipaḥ || 7

praṇi patya mahābhāgaṃ tamṛṣiṃ śaṃsitavratam |
nirviṇṇo'tima matvena rājyā paharaṇena ca || 8

jagāma sadyas tapase sa ca vaiśyo mahāmune |
saṃdarśa nārthaṃ ambāyā nadī pulina saṃsthitāḥ || 9

sa ca vaiśyas tapastape devī sūktaṃ paraṃ japan |
tau tasmin puline devyāḥ kṛtvā mūrtiṃ mahīmayīm || 10

arhaṇāṃ cakra tus tasyāḥ puṣpa dhūpāgni tarpaṇaiḥ |
nirāhārau yatāhārau tanmanaskau samāhitau || 11

dadatustau baliṃ caiva nijagātrā sṛgukṣitam |
evaṃ samārā dhayato strībhīr varṣair yatātmanoḥ || 12

parituṣṭā jagad dhātrī pratyakṣaṃ prāha caṇḍikā || 13

devyuvāca || 14

yat prārthyate tvayā bhūpa tvayā ca kulanandana |
mat tastat prāpyatāṃ sarvaṃ parituṣṭā dadāmi tat || 15

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca || 16

tato vavre nṛpo rājya mavi bhraṃ śyan yajanmani |
atraiva ca nijam rājyaṃ hata śatru balaṃ balāt || 17

so'pi vaiśyas tato jñānaṃ vavre nirviṇṇa mānasaḥ |
mametya hamiti prājñāḥ saṅga vicyuti kārakam || 18

devyuvāca || 19

svalpāira hobhir nṛpate svaṃ rājyaṃ prāpsyate bhavān || 20

hatvā ripūnas khalitaṃ tava tatra bhaviṣyati || 21

mṛtaśca bhūyaḥ sampṛāpya janma devād vivasvataḥ || 22

śāvarṇiko nāma manur bhavān bhuvi bhaviṣyati || 23

vaiśya varya tvayā yasca varo'smatto'bhivāñ chitaḥ || 24

taṃ prayacchāmi saṃsidhyai tava jñānaṃ bhaviṣyati || 25

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca || 26

iti dattvā tayor devī yathā bhilaṣitaṃ varam || 27

babhūvān tarhitā sadyo bhaktyā tābhyā mabhiṣṭutā |
evaṃ devyā varam labdhvā suratha kṣatri yarṣabhaḥ || 28

sūryāj janma samāsādya sāvarṇir bhavitā manuḥ || 29

evaṃ devyā varam labdhvā suratha kṣatri yarṣabhaḥ |
sūryāj janma samāsādya sāvarṇir bhavitā manuḥ || 30

| klīm om |

॥ śrīsaptaśatīdevīmāhātmyaṁ samāptam ॥

॥ oṃ tat sat oṃ ॥

concluding stotras



hṛdayā nyāsaṃ

oṃ

khaḍginī śulinī ghorā gadinī cakriṇī tathā ||
śaṅkhiṇī cāpinī bāṇa bhuśuṇḍī paighāyudhā |
hṛdayāya namaḥ

śulena pāhi no devi pāhi khaḍgena cāmbike |
ghaṇṭā svanena naḥ pāhi cāpajyāniḥ svanena ca ||
śirase svāhā

prācyāṃ rakṣa pratīcyāṃ ca caṇḍike rakṣa dakṣiṇe |
bhrāmaṇenātmaśūlasya uttarasyāṃ tathēśvari ||
śikhāyai vaṣaṭ

saumyāni yaṇī rūpāṇi trailokye vicaranti te |
yāni cātyarthaghorāṇi tai rakṣāsmāṃstathā bhuvam ||
kavacāya huṃ

khaḍgaśūlagadādīni yāni cāstrāṇi te'mbike |
karapallavaśaṅgīni tairasmān rakṣa sarvataḥ ||
netratrayāya vauṣaṭ

sarvasvarūpe sarveśe sarvaśakti samanvite |
bhayebhyastrāhi no devi durge devi namo'stu te ||
astrāya phaṭ

oṃ bhūrbhuvassuvaroṃ iti dikvimokaḥ

saptaśatī dhyānam



I meditate upon the three-eyed Goddess, Durga, the Reliever of Difficulties; the luster of her beautiful body is like lightening. She sits upon the shoulders of a lion and appears very fierce. Many maidens, holding the double-edged sword and shield in their hands are standing at readiness to serve Her. She holds in Her hands the discus & club, double-edged sword & shield, arrow & bow, noose & the mudra connecting the thumb and pointer fingers extended upwards, indicating the granting of wisdom. Her intrinsic nature is fore, and upon Her head, She wears the moon as a crown.

dhyānam

oṃ vidyud dāmasamaprabhāṃ mṛgapati skandhasthitāṃ
bhīṣaṇāṃ
kanyābhiḥ karavālakheṭa vilasad-dhastābhirā sevitām |
hastaiścakra gadāsi kheṭa viśikhāṃścāpaṃ guṇaṃ
tarjanīṃ bibhrāṇāmanalātmikāṃ śaśidharāṃ durgāṃ
trinetraṃ bhaje ||

saptaśatī panchopachāram

laṁ pṛthivyātmikāyai namaḥ | gandhaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on little fingers of both hands - offering gandham. Request Devi to imagine this offering of gandham to fill the size of the earth

ham ākāśātmikāyai namaḥ | puṣpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll index fingers on thumbs of both hands - offering puspam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of pusham to fill the size of the entire sky.

yaṁ vāyvātmikāyai namaḥ | dhūpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on index fingers of both hands - offering dhoopam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of dhoopam to fill the size of all the air Vayu (air).

raṁ agnyātmikāyai namaḥ | dīpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on middle fingers of both hands - offering agni. Request Devi to imagine this offering of deepam to fill the all agni.

vaṁ amṛtātmikāyai namaḥ | amṛitaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on ring fingers of both hands - offering naivedyam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of Amrit or Ambrosia.

saṁ sarvātmikāyai namaḥ | samastopacārāṇ samarpayāmi

offer akshatas and namaskar mudra... offering all services in the mind mental and the deities will offer to you.

navākṣari (navārṇa) japam

NAVĀKṢARI (NAVĀRṆA) JAPAM

Surrender self to mantra before japam.

Pray for purification of mind (when mind becomes pure and free from desires it attains liberation).

Visualise deity on crown lotus and self moving into and merging with deity

Visualise oneness with the divine infinite consciousness with self transforming into meditational deity.

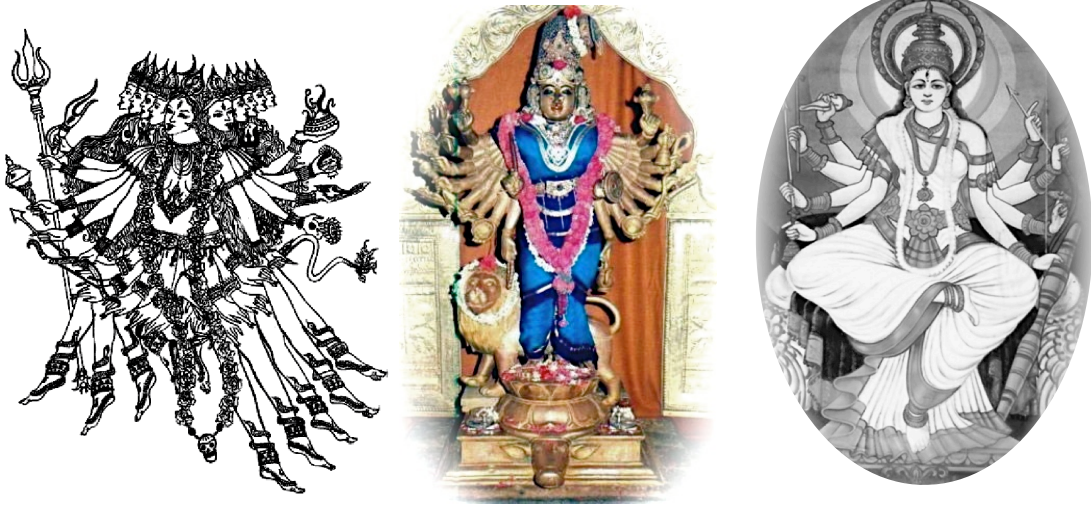
ॐ ऐं ह्रीं क्लीं चामुण्डायै विच्चे

oṃ aiṃ hṛīṃ klīṃ cāmuṇḍāyai vicce
(108 times i.e. 1 mala or multiples of mala)

navākṣari hr̥dayā (anga) nyāsaṃ

om aiṃ hr̥dayāya namaḥ	touch heart-center with fingertips of both hands
hr̥īm śiṛase svāhā	top of head
kl̥īm śikhāyai vaṣaṭ	back of head
cāmuṇḍāyai kavacāya hum	clasp upper part of arms just below shoulder with arms crossed at chest
vicce netrāyāya vauṣaṭ	3 eyes
aiṃ hr̥īm kl̥īm cāmuṇḍāyai vicce astrāya phat	While saying this, trace a clockwise circle around your body using your right hand. Clockwise as if you were looking down on your head from above. As you say "phat", you can clap your hands loudly and decisively either once or 3 times. Clapping loudly is considered to break up any stagnant or negative energy patterns in the room, and to scatter any uncooperative entities in the area. So do this with a firm will and determination that nothing is going to deter you from your purpose of chanting Mother's sacred names. (Astra means a fiery missile, so here we are tracing a subtle circular shield of fire, to protect us while we practice. Phat is a powerful sound of expelling and repelling negative energy.)
om bhūrbhuvassuvarom iti dikbandaḥ	While saying this, you can again pass your right hand in a clockwise circle above and around your body. While doing this, you can snap your fingers. Traditionally, one snaps in each of the 10 directions (front, front-right, right, right-back, back, left-back, left, front-left, up, and down). But you can just snap a bunch of times and mentally think of the 10 directions. ("Bhurbhuvassuvarom" contains 4 words, bhuhu, bhuvaha, suvaha, and Om. These are the same 4 words in the first line of Gayatri Mantra. Bhuhu refers to the Earth, bhuvaha refers to the next level or loka, and suvaha refers to a level higher than that, like a heaven or astral realm. By snapping in all directions, we protect ourselves from unnecessary intrusions that might come from any direction

navākṣari dhyānam



dhyānam

khaḍgaṃ cakṛa gadesū cāpa pariḡhāñ chūlaṃ bhuśuṇḍīm śiraḥ
śaṅkhaṃ saṃdadhatīm karai strinayanāṃ sarvāṅga bhūṣāvṛtām |
nīlāśmadyutimāsyā pāda daśakāṃ seve mahākālīkām
yāmastaut svapite harau kamalajo hantuṃ madhuṃ kaiṭabham ||

akṣasrak paraśuṃ gadeṣu kuliśaṃ padmaṃ dhanuḥ kuṇḍikāṃ
daṇḍaṃ śaktim asiṃ ca carma jalajaṃ ghaṇṭāṃ surābhājanam |
śulaṃ pāśa sudarśane ca dadhatīm hastaiḥ prasannānanām
seve sairibha mardiniṃmiha mahālakṣmīm sarojasthitām ||

ghaṇṭā sūla halāni śaṅkha musale cakṛaṃ dhanuḥ sāyakaṃ
hastābjair dadhatīm ghanānta vilasacchītāṃ śutulya prabhāṃ |
gauṛīdeha samudbhavāṃ trijagatām ādhārabhūtām
mahāpūrvāmatra sarasvatīm anubhaje śumbhādi daityārdinīm ||

navākṣari panchopachāram

laṁ pṛthivyātmikāyai namaḥ | gandhaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on little fingers of both hands - offering gandham. Request Devi to imagine this offering of gandham to fill the size of the earth

ham ākāśātmikāyai namaḥ | puṣpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll index fingers on thumbs of both hands - offering puspam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of pusham to fill the size of the entire sky.

yaṁ vāyvātmikāyai namaḥ | dhūpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on index fingers of both hands - offering dhoopam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of dhoopam to fill the size of all the air Vayu (air).

raṁ agnyātmikāyai namaḥ | dīpaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on middle fingers of both hands - offering agni. Request Devi to imagine this offering of deepam to fill the all agni.

vaṁ amṛtātmikāyai namaḥ | amṛitaṁ kalpayāmi

roll thumbs on ring fingers of both hands - offering naivedyam. Request Devi to imagine this offering of Amrit or Ambrosia.

saṁ sarvātmikāyai namaḥ | samastopacārāṇ samarpayāmi

offer akshatas and namaskar mudra... offering all services in the mind mental and the deities will offer to you.

ṛgvedoktaṃ devīsūktam audio

vedic pronunciation

(hold iPad in landscape mode to listen to audio clip and navigate text simultaneously)

In this hymn, the Goddess expresses Her primary place as the source and power of all that exists in the vast universe, including the Gods themselves. She also asserts Her identity as the absolute One – all the Gods are but facets and expressions of Her ultimate divine presence.

She also expresses Her grace, affirming that She sustains not only the sadhaka – one who has accepted a guru with humility and sincerely practices with the goal of liberation – but also those who deny Her or are totally unaware of Her existence.

For those who are truly devoted and committed to spiritual discipline, Devi says that She obliterates the obstacles to their progress and spiritual awakening.

Finally, Devi proclaims Herself to be the source (yonī) of all creation, the source of creative power itself, and reveals Herself as both immanent and transcendent being, consciousness as well as manifested reality. Ultimately, Devi is all that is, both manifest and unmanifest, embracing and surpassing the limits of the limitless universe.

See the deity as Self. See that the deity fills everyone and everything. See that the entire universes exists within that deity. Have no desires and just surrender to that deity.

om

ahaṃ rudrebhir vasubhiś carām yahamā” dityai ruta viśva
de”vaiḥ |

ahaṃ mitrā varuṇobhā bibhar-myaham in”drāgnī ..
ahamaśvi·no**bhā** || 1

ahaṃ somamā·hanasam” bibhar-myaham tva**stā**”ramuta
pū**ṣaṇaṃ** **bhagam**” |
ahaṃ dadhāmidra**viṇaṃ** havi**ṣmate** suprāvyē·ye..yeyajamānāya
suvate || 2

ahaṃ rā**ṣṭrī**” saṅgamanī vasū”·nām cikitu**ṣī**” prathamā
yajñi·yā”·nām |
tāmmā” devā vya·dadhuḥ purutrā bhūristhā·trām
bhūryyā” veśayan”tīm 3

mayā so annamatti yo vipa·śyati yaḥ prā**ṇiti** ya’ī”ṃ ..
śrnot·yuktam |
amantavo mām ta upa kṣiyanti śrudhi śruta śrad**dhivaṃ** te”
vadāmi || 4

ahameva svaya·midam vadāmi ju**ṣṭam**” deve·bhiruta mānu**ṣebhiḥ**
|
yaṃ kāmāye taṃ tamugraṃ kṛ**ṇomi** taṃ brahmā**ṇaṃ** taṃr**ṣiṃ** taṃ
sume**dhām** || 5

ahaṃ rudrāya dhanurā tanomi brahma·dviṣe śarave hantavā u |
ahaṃ janā”ya samadam” krṇo·myaham dyāvā” pṛ**thivī** .. āviveśa
|| 6

ahaṃ suve pitaramasya mūrd**han** mamayoni
rapsv(a.. a)ntah samudre |
tato vi·tiṣṭhe bhuvanānu viśvo tāmūṃ dyām
var**ṣmaṇopa** sprśami || 7

ahameva vāta·iva pravā”m yārabhamā ṇābhuvanā niviśvā” |
paro divā para enā pṛthivyai tāvatī mahinā saṃba·bhūva || 8

oṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

kuñjikā stotram

This is the essence of the Chandi, the Navarna Mantra, the constant reminder that change She will, change She must, because change is Her intrinsic Nature.

Kunjika literally means something overgrown or hidden by growth or growing things. Siddha means perfection. Stotram is the song. The Song of Perfection which is no longer hidden because of growth. That is, our spiritual growth and understanding of the Chandi exposes the hidden meanings of the bija mantras in the Song.

śiva uvāca

śṛṇu devi pravakṣyāmi kuñjikā stotra·muttamam |
yena mantra prabhāveṇa caṇḍī jāpaḥ śubho bhavet ||

na kavacaṃ nārgalā stotraṃ kīlakam na rahasyakaṃ |
na sūktaṃ nāpi hyānaṃ ca·nanyāso na ca vārcanam ||

kuñjikā pāṭha mātṛeṇa durgā pāṭha phalaṃ labhet |
ati guhyataṃ devi devānāmapī durlabham ||

gopaṇīyaṃ prayatnena svayo·niriva pārvati |
māraṇaṃ mohanaṃ vaśyaṃ stambha·noccāṭa nādikaṃ |
pāṭha mātṛeṇa saṃsid·dhyet kuñjikā stotra·muttamam ||

(CHANT IN ONE FULL BREATH)

oṃ aiṃ hrīm klīm cāmuṇḍāyai vicce ||

oṃ glaum huṃ klīm jūṃ saḥ

jvālaya jvālaya jvala jvala prajvala prajvala

aiṃ hrīm klīm cāmuṇḍāyai vicce

jvala haṃ saṃ laṃ kṣam phaṭ svāhā ||

namaste rudra rūpiṇyai namaste madhu mardini |
namaḥ kaiṭabha hāriṇyai namaste mahiṣārdini || 1

namaste śumbha hantryaica niśumbhāsuraḥ ghātini || 2

jāgrataṃ hi mahā devi japaṃ sidḍhaṃ kuruśvame |
aiṃkārī sṛṣṭi rūpāyai hrīmkaṛī prati pālikā || 3

klīmkaṛī kāma rūpiṇyai bīja rūpe namo'stute |
cāmuṇḍā caṇḍā ghātī ca yaikārī varadāyinī || 4

vicce cā bhayadā nityaṃ namaste mantra rūpiṇi || 5

dhāṃ dhīm dhūṃ dhūrjateḥ patnī vāṃ vīm vūṃ vāga dhīśvarī |
krāṃ krīm krūṃ kālīkā devi śāṃ śīm sūṃ me śubhaṃ kuru || 6

huṃ huṃ huṃkāra rūpiṇyai jaṃ jaṃ jaṃ jaṃbhaṇādinī |
bhrāṃ bhrīṃ bhrūṃ bhaiṛavī bhadre bhavānyai te namo namaḥ ||
7

aṃ kaṃ caṃ ṭaṃ taṃ paṃ yaṃ śaṃ vīṃ duṃ aiṃ vīṃ haṃ kṣaṃ |
dhijāgraṃ dhijāgraṃ troṭaya troṭaya dīptaṃ kuru kuru svāhā ||

pāṃ pīṃ pūṃ pārvatī pūrṇā khāṃ khīṃ khūṃ khecarī tathā || 8

sāṃ sīṃ sūṃ saptaśatī devyā mantra siddhiṃ kuruṣva me || 9

idaṃ tu kuñjikā stotraṃ mantra jāgati hetave |
abhakte naiva dātavyaṃ gopitaṃ rakṣa pārvatī ||

yastu kuñjika yā devi·hīnāṃ saptaśatīm paṭhet |
na tasya jāyate siddhi·raraṇye rodanaṃ yathā ||

durgā suktam

DURGĀ SUKTAM

durgā suktam

vedic pronunciation

(hold iPad in landscape mode to listen to
audio clip and navigate text simultaneously)

om jātavedase sunavāma soma'marātī·yato nidahāti vedah |
sa naḥ parṣadati durgāṇi viśvā nāveva sindhum duritāt·yagnih || 1

tāmaghnavarṇāṁ tapasā jvalantīm vairocanīm karmaphaleṣu juṣṭā'm |
durgām deviṁ śaraṇamaham prapa'dya sutarasi tarase namaḥ || 2

agne tvaṁ pārāyā navyo asmān·svasti bhirati durgāṇi viśvā" |
pūśca pṛthvī bahulāna uvī bhavā tokāya tanayāya śaṁyoh || 3

viśvāni no durgahā jātavedas·sindhu na nāvā duritātīparṣi |
agne atrivan·manasā grṇāno"smākaṁ bodhyavitā tanūnā"m || 4

pṛtanājitaṁ sahamāna·mugramagniṁhuvema
paramāth·sadhasthā"t |
sa naḥ parṣadati durgāṇi viśvā kṣāmaddevo atiduritāt·yagnih || 5

pratnoṣi·kamīDyo adhvarēṣu sanācca hotā navyaśca sathsi |
svāṁcā"gne tanuvaṁ piprayasvā·smabhyaṁ ca
saubhāgya·māya·jasva || 6

gobhir·juṣṭamayu·joniṣitktaṁ tave"ndra viṣṇoranusaṁcarema |
nākasya prsthama·bhī·saṁvasāno vaiṣṇavīm loka iha mādayantām || 7

om kātyāyanāya vidmahe kanyākumārī dhīmahi |
tanno durgih pracodayā"t ||

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śānti'h ||

kṣamā prārthanā

oṃ

aparādhā sahasrāṇi kriyante'harṇiśaṃ mayā |
dāso'yamiti māṃ matvā kṣamasva parameśvari ||

avāhanaṃ na jñāmi na jñāmi visarjanam |
pūjām caiva na jñāmi kṣamyatām parameśvari ||

mantrahīnaṃ kriyāhīnaṃ bhakti-hīnaṃ sureśvari |
yatpūjitaṃ mayā devi paripūrṇaṃ tadastu me ||

aparādhāśataṃ kṛtvā jagadambeti coccaret |
yāṃ gatiṃ samavāpnoti na tām brahmādayaḥ surāḥ ||

sāparādhō'smi śaraṇaṃ prāptastvāṃ jagadambike |
idānīmanukampyo'haṃ yathechasi tathā kuru ||

ajñānādvismṛter bhrāntyā yan-nyūnamadhikaṃ kṛtam |
tat sarvaṃ kṣamyatām devi prasīda parameśvari ||

kāmeśvari jaganmātaḥ saccidānanda-vigrahe |
grhāṇārcāmimāṃ prītyā prasīda parameśvari ||

guhyāti-guhyagoptṛi tvam grhāṇāsmatkṛtaṃ japam |
siddhir bhavatu me devi tvat prasādāt sureśvari ||

oṃ

appendix



prādhānika rahasyam

PRĀDHĀNIKA RAHASYAM

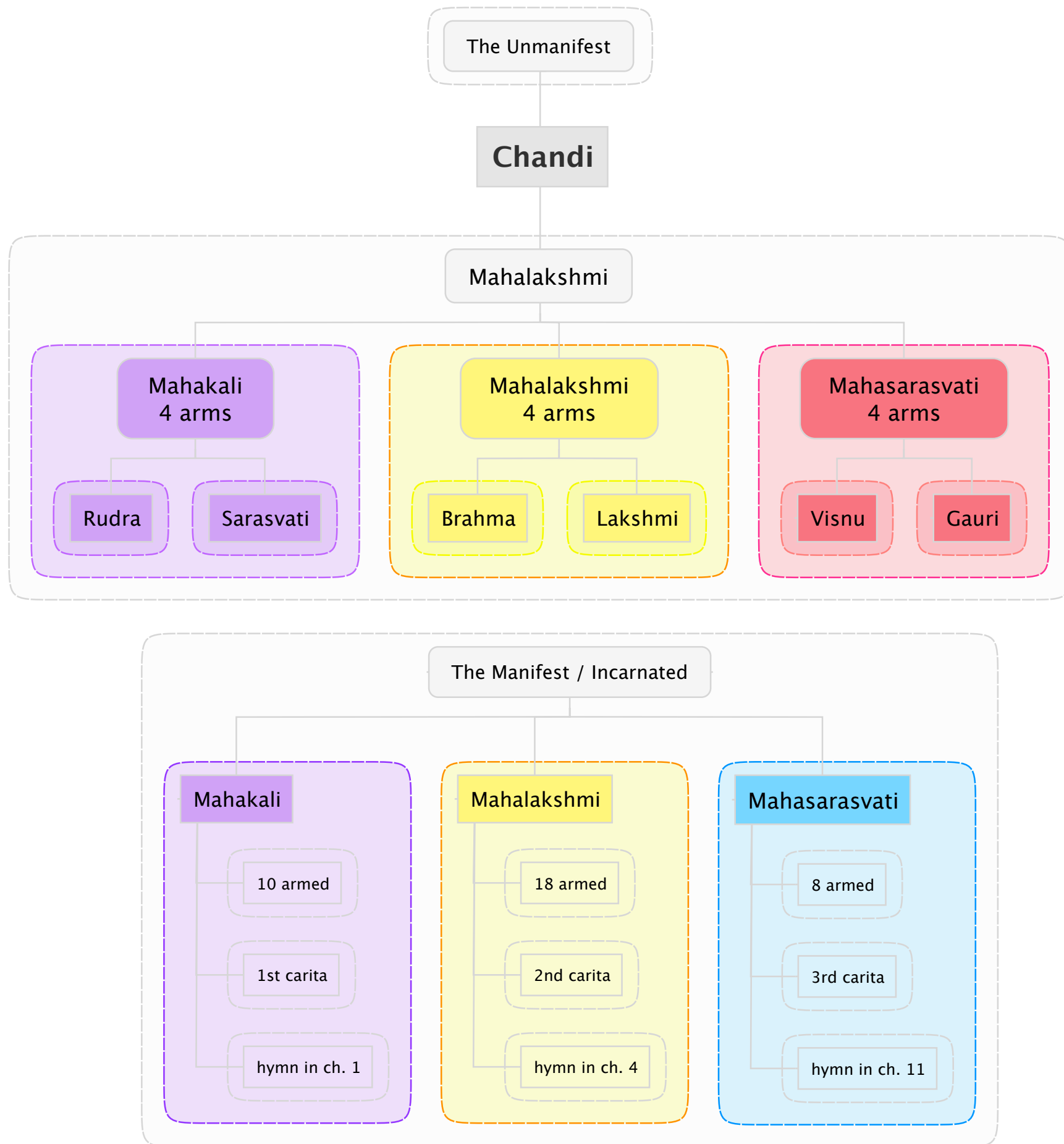
The primal Mahalakshmi is constituted of all 3 gunas (triguna) and Her svarupa forms of Mahakali (tamas), Malakshmi (rajas) and Mahasaraswati (sattva).

Each of these forms then created a twin male-female form;

Mahalakshmi
produced Brahma / Lakshmi;

Mahakali
produced Rudra / Saraswati;

Mahasaraswati
produced Vishnu / Gauri.



yantra



The Chandika Chakra yantra is constructed by drawing an eight petalled lotus with a Shatkona (six-pointed star) in its centre.

The first three Bijas of the Navarna mantra are written in the centre of the Shatkona. The rest of the Bijas are written in the Shatkona starting from the east.

The Bijas should be written in a clockwise pattern from right to the left.

It should be noted that during Akshara Nyasa and Yantra lekhana, all letters should be used along with the Bindu.

śrī devyatharvaśīrṣam

oṃ

sa^{ve} vai devā devī·mupatasth^uḥ kāsī tvaṃ mahādevīti || 1

sābravīt --

ahaṃ brahmasvarūpiṇī |
mattaḥ prakṛti puruṣātmakaṃ jagat |
śūnyaṃ cāśūnyaṃ ca || 2

ahaṃ·ānandā·nānandau |
ahaṃ vijñā·nāvijñāne |
ahaṃ brahmā·brahmaṇī veditavye |
ahaṃ pañcabhūtānya pañcabhūtāni |
ahaṃ akhilaṃ jagat || 3

vedo'ham·avedo'ham |
vidyāham avidyāham
ajāham·anajāham |
adhaścordhvaṃ ca tiryak·cāham || 4

ahaṃ rudrebhir vasubhiś carāmi |
ahaṃ·ādityai·ruta viśva devaiḥ |
ahaṃ mitrā varuṇā·vubhau bibharmi |
ahaṃ indrāgnī ahaṃ aśvinā·vubhau || 5

ahaṃ somaṃ tvaṣṭāraṃ pūṣaṇaṃ bhagaṃ dadhāmi |
ahaṃ viṣṇum·urukramaṃ brahmāṇamuta prajāpatiṃ
dadhāmi || 6

ahaṃ dadhāmi draviṇaṃ haviṣmate
 suprāvyē yajamānāya sunvate |
 ahaṃ rāṣṭrī saṅgamanī vasūnāṃ
 cikituṣī prathamā yajñiyānām |
 ahaṃ suve pitaramasya ...
 ... mūrdhanmama yonirapsvantaḥ samudre |
 ya evaṃ veda |
 sa daivīm sampadamāpnoti || 7

te devā abruvan --
 namo devyai mahādevyai śivāyai satataṃ namaḥ |
 namaḥ prakṛtyai bhadrayai niyatāḥ praṇatāḥ sma tām || 8

tāmagnivarṇaṃ tapasā jvalantīm ...
 ... vairocānīm karmaphaleṣu juṣṭām |
 durgāṃ devīm śaraṇaṃ prapadyā ...
 ... mahesurān·nāsayitryai te namaḥ || 9

devīm vācam·ajanayanta devās tām viśvarūpāḥ paśavo
 vadanti |
 sā no mandre·ṣamūrjaṃ duhānā ...
 ... dhenur·vāgasmānupa suṣṭutaitu || 10

kālarātrīm brahma·stutām
 vaiṣṇavīm skandamātaram |
 Sarasvatīm aditīm dakṣa·duhitaram
 namāmaḥ pāvanām śivām || 11

mahālakṣmyai ca vidmahe sarva śaktyai ca dhīmahi |
 tanno devī pracodayāt || 12

aditi·hya·janiṣṭha dakṣa yā duhitā tava |
 tām devā anvajāyanta bhadra amṛta·bandhavaḥ || 13

ka e ī la hrīm ha sa ka ha la hrīm sa ka la hrīm (pachadasi mantra)

kāmō yoniḥ kamalā vajrapāṇir(h)
 guhā hasā mātariśvā·bhramindraḥ |
 punarguhā sakalā māyayā ca
 purū·cyaiṣā viśva·mātādi vidyom || 14

eṣā” tmaśaktiḥ |
 eṣā viśva mohinī |
 pāśāṅkuśa dhanur bāṇadharā |
 eṣā śrī mahāvidyā |
 ya evaṃ veda sa śokaṃ tarati || 15

namaste astu bhagavati mātaraśmān pāhi sarvataḥ || 16

saiṣāṣṭau vasavaḥ |
 saiṣaikādaśa rudrāḥ |
 saiṣā dvādaśādityāḥ |
 saiṣā viśvedevāḥ somapā asoma·pāśca |
 saiṣā yātu dhānā asurā rakṣāṃsi piśācā yakṣāḥ sid dhāḥ |
 saiṣā sattva rajas tamāṃsi |
 saiṣā brahma viṣṇu rudra rūpiṇī |
 saiṣā prajā·patīndra manavaḥ |
 saiṣā graha·nakṣatra jyotīṃṣi |
 kalākāṣṭhādi kālarūpiṇī |
 tām·ahaṃ praṇaumi nityam || 17

pāpā·pahāriṇīm devīm
 bhukti mukti pradāyinīm |
 anantāṃ vijayāṃ śuddhāṃ
 śaraṇyāṃ śivadāṃ śivām ||

hrīm - the seed mantra that accomplishes all objectives

viyadīkāra·saṃyuktaṃ
vītihoṭra samanvitam |
ardhen·dulasitaṃ devyā
bījaṃ sarvārtha sādhaḥakam || 18

who meditates upon this one-syllabled deity, his consciousness becomes pure, he becomes filled with ultimate bliss, and he becomes the ocean of Wisdom

evamekāk·śaraṃ brahma yatayaḥ śuddha cetasaḥ |
dhyāyanti paramānanda·mayā jñanām·burāśayaḥ || 19

aiṃ hrīm klīm cāmuṇḍāyai vicce (navārṇa mantra)

vāṃmāyā brahmasustasmāt śaṣṭhaṃ vaktra samanvitam |
sūryo'vāma·śrotra bindu saṃyuk·taṣṭāt tṛtīyakaḥ |
nārā·yaṇena saṃ·mīśro vāyuścā·dharayuk tataḥ |
vicce navārṇako'rṇaḥ·syān mahadānaḥda dāyakaḥ || 20

hr̥tpuṇḍarī·kama·dhyasthām
prātaḥ sūrya sama prabhām |
pāśāṅkuśa dharām saumyām
varadā·bhaya hastakām |
trinetram raktavasanaṃ
bhakta·kāmadughām bhaje || 21

namāmi tvām mahādevīm
mahābhaya·vināśinīm |
mahādurga praśamanīm
mahākāruṇya rūpiṇīm || 22

yasyāḥ svarūpaṃ brahmādayo najānanti
tasmāducyate ajñeyā |
yasyā anto nalaḥbhate
tasmāducyate anātā |
yasyā lakṣyaṃ nopa·lakṣyate
tasmāducyate alakṣyā |
yasyā jananaṃ nopalaḥbhate
tasmāducyate ajā |
ekaiva sarvatra vartate
tasmāducyate ekā |
ekaiva viśvarūpiṇī
tasmāducyate naikā |
ata evocyate ajñe·yānantā·lakṣyā·jaikā naiketi || 23

mantrāṇām mātṛkā devī
śabdānām jñānarūpiṇī |
jñānānām cinmayātītā
śūnyānām śūnyasākṣiṇī |
yasyāḥ parataṃ nāsti
saiśā durgā prakīrtitā || 24

tām durgām durgamām devīm
durācāra·vighātinīm |
namāmi bhava·bhīto'haṃ
saṃsārā·ṇava tāriṇīm || 25

idam·atharvaśīrṣam yo'dhīte
sa pañcātharvaśīrṣa japa phalamāpnoti |
idam·atharvaśīrṣam·ajñātvā yo'rcām sthāpayati --
śatalakṣam prajaptvāpi so'rcā·sidḍhiṃ na vindati |
śatam·aṣṭottaram cāsyā puraścaryā vidhiḥ smṛtaḥ |
daśavāram pathed yastu sadyaḥ pāpaiḥ pramucyate |
mahādurgāṇi tarati mahādevyāḥ prasādataḥ || 26

sāyam·adhīyāno divasakṛtaṃ pāpaṃ nāśayati |
prātar·adhīyāno rātrikṛtaṃ pāpaṃ nāśayati |
sāyaṃ prātaḥ prayuñjāno apāpo bhavati |
niśīthe turīya·sandhyāyāṃ japtvā vāk siddhir bhavati |
nūtanāyāṃ pratimāyāṃ japtvā devatā·sānnidhyaṃ bhavati |
prāṇa pratiṣṭhāyāṃ japtvā prāṇānāṃ pratiṣṭhā bhavati |
bhaumā·śvinyāṃ mahādevī sannidhau japtvā
mahāmṛtyuṃ tarati |
sa mahā mṛtyuṃ tarati ya evaṃ veda |
ityu·paniṣat ||

sapta śloki durgā

śiva uvāca

devi tvam bhaktasulabhe sarvakāryavidhāyinī |
kalau hi kāryasiddhyarthamupāyaṃ brūhi yatnataḥ ||

devyuvāca

śṛṇu deva pravakṣyāmi kalau sarveṣṭasāadhanam |
mayā tavaiva snehenāpyambāstutiḥ prakāśyate ||

oṃ asya śrīdurgā sapta ślokī stora mantrasya nārayaṇa ṛṣiḥ
anuṣṭup chandaḥ śrimāhākālī mahālakṣhmī mahāsarvasvatyo
devatāḥ śrīdurgā prītyartham sapta ślokī durgā pāṭhe
viniyogaḥ ||

oṃ jñānināmapi cetāṃsi devī bhagavatī hi sā |
balādākṛṣya mohāya mahāmāyā prayacchati ||

durge smṛtā harasi bhītima śeṣajantoḥ
svasthaiḥ smṛtā matimatīva śubhāṃ dadāsi |
dāridrya duḥkha bhayahāriṇi kā tvadanyā
sarvopakāra karaṇāya sadā'rdracittā ||

sarva maṅgala maṅgalye śive sarvārtha sādhike |
śaraṇya trambake gauri nārāyaṇi namo-stu te ||

śaraṇāgata dīnārta paritrāṇa parāyaṇe |
sarvasyārti hare devi nārāyaṇi namo-stu te ||

sarvasvarūpe sarveṣe sarvaśakti samanvite |
bhayebhyastrāhi no devi durge devi namo-stu te ||

rogānaśeṣānapahaṃsi tuṣṭā
ruṣṭā tu kāmān sakalānabhīṣṭān |
tvāmāśritānāṃ na vipannarāṇāṃ
tvāmāśritā hyāśrayatāṃ prayānti ||

sarvābādhā praśamanaṃ trailokyasyākhileśvari |
evameva tvayā kāryamasmadvairivināśanam ||

oṃ

pronunciation guide

Transliteration color codes

ḥ : voiced fricative e.g. namaḥ

ṇ : nasal retroflex e.g. prāṇā

ṛ : retroflex (as in rumble) e.g. sarvaṁ

ṣ : retroflex (as in shadow) e.g. viṣṇu, vaiṣṇavī

— : underline indicates words that are grouped together in the original Sanskrit text

e.g. सर्वमङ्गलमाङ्गल्ये
sarvamaṅgalamāṅgalye

ː : indicates aids to assist pronunciation of long words
e.g. sarva-māṅgala-māṅgalye

or sarva māṅgala māṅgalye

Long vowels (e.g. ā) are held twice as long

ā : long form of a e.g. : ātma

ī : long form of i e.g. : hrīm

ū : long form of u e.g. : paripūrṇam

ṛ : rolled r e.g. : kṛtam

ṝ : rolled r followed by a long i e.g. : kṛtī

ṁ or ṁ : nasal sound e.g. : ahaṅkara ; om

ḥ : unvoiced aspirated h.

If after a short vowel it is pronounced like aha, iḥ like ihi
e.g. : śantiḥ is pronounced shantihi.

Sibilants

ś : ‘sh’ sound pronounced at the back of the palate.
e.g. : śrī, śiva, śvarūpeṇa

ṣ : as in “sharp” e.g. : mānuṣebhiḥ, viṣṇu, vaiṣṇavī

s : regular ‘s’ as in “spirit” e.g. : svāhā, surā

Consonants

ṅ : as in king, ring e.g.: piṅgala

ñ : as in canyon e.g.: kuñjika

ṇ : pronounce the letter n with tongue rolled up.
as in none e.g.: prāṇa

ṭ : tip of tongue slightly upwards e.g.: samācaṣṭa

ṭh : aspirated h as in anthill e.g.: vitiṣṭhe

ḍ : tongue rolled up as in drum e.g.: caṇḍa

Compounds

kṣ : like the ksh in backshift e.g.: pravakṣyāmi

velars	palatals	retroflexes	dentals	labials	
क [k] k K	च [c] c C	ट [ɖ] ṭ Ṭ	त [t] t T	प [p] p P	tenuis plosives
ख [kʰ] kh Kh	छ [cʰ] ch Ch	ठ [ʈʰ] ṭh Ṭh	थ [tʰ] th Th	फ [pʰ] ph Ph	aspirated plosives
ग [g] g G	ज [j] j J	ड [ɖ] ḍ Ḭ	द [d] d D	ब [b] b B	voiced plosives
घ [gʱ] gh Gh	झ [jʱ] jh Jh	ढ [ɖʱ] ḍh Ḭh	ध [dʱ] dh Dh	भ [bʱ] bh Bh	breathy-voiced plosives
ङ [ŋ] ṅ Ṇ	ञ [ɲ] ñ Ñ	ण [ɳ] ṇ Ṇ	न [n] n N	म [m] m M	nasal stops
	य [j] y Y	र [r] r R	ल [l] l L	व [ʋ] v V	semi-vowels
	श [ʃ] ś Ś	ष [ʂ] ṣ Ṣ	स [s] s S		sibilants
ह [h] h H					voiced fricative



sarvam śrī jagadambā panamastu



Commentary

by Dr. Satya
Prakash Choudary

First episode

Pradhama Carita

Chapter 1

Two unlucky losers meet in a forest. The first is a king by the name of Suratha who protected his people treating them as his own children. He is defeated in a battle by enemies though they were a small force. On his return to his kingdom he is again attacked by powerful enemies. The king now bereft of strength is further robbed of his treasury and army by his own wicked ministers. Deprived of his kingdom, king Suratha rides alone on horseback into a dense forest. There he comes to the hermitage of sage Medhas. Graced by the disciples of the sage the hermitage is inhabited by wild beasts tamed of their ferocity. After spending some time at the hermitage, overcome by a deep attachment to what he considered as his own, the king is worried about his kingdom, his chief elephant, his followers and his treasury.

Overcome with attachment, he thought, “I do not know whether the capital which was well guarded by my ancestors and recently deserted by me is being guarded righteously or not by my servants of evil conduct. I do not know what care my chief elephant, heroic and always elated, and now fallen into the hands of my foes, will get. Those who were my constant followers and received favour, riches and food from me, now certainly render service to other kings. The treasures which I gathered with great difficulty will be squandered by those ceaseless spendthrifts addicted to improper expenditures”.

Near the hermitage of the sage the king saw a merchant, and asked him: “Who are you? What is the reason for your coming here? Wherefore do you appear as if afflicted with grief and depressed in mind?” Hearing the empathetic enquiry of the king, the merchant bowed respectfully and replied to the king. “I am a merchant named Samadhi, born in a wealthy family. I have been cast out by my unworthy sons and wife, through greed for my wealth. My wife and sons have misappropriated my riches, and made me devoid of wealth. Cast out by my trusted kinsmen, I have come to the forest grief-stricken. Dwelling here, I do not know anything about the welfare of my sons, kinsmen and wife. How are my sons? Are they of good conduct or of or evil ways?”

Thereupon the king asked the merchant, “Why is your mind affectionately attached to those covetous folks, your sons, wife and others, who have deprived you of your wealth?” The merchant replied, “This very thought has occurred to me, just

as you have uttered it. But what can I do? Unable to detach my mind bears deep affection to those very persons who have driven me out in their greed for wealth, abandoning love for a father and attachment to one's master and kinsmen. Although I know it I do not comprehend how the mind is prone to love even towards worthless kinsmen? On account of them I heave heavy sighs and feel dejected. What can I do since my mind does not become harsh towards those unloving ones?"

Then the merchant Samadhi and the noble king Suratha together approached sage Medhas and after observing the etiquette worthy of him and as was proper, they sat down and conversed with him. The king said: "Sir, I wish to ask you one thing. Pray, reply to it. Not being under the control of my intellect, my mind is afflicted with grief. Though I have lost the kingdom, I have an attachment to all the paraphernalia of my kingdom. Though I know the actuality how is this sense of 'mine' afflicting me like an ignorant man, O best of sages? And this merchant has been disowned by his children, wife and servants, and forsaken by his own people; still he is inordinately affectionate towards them. Thus both he and I, drawn by attachment towards objects whose defects we do know, are exceedingly unhappy. How is it that even the knowledgeable are deluded? This delusion besets me as well as him, blinded as we are in our ability to discern."

As his name implies (medhas: intelligence or wisdom), sage Medhas is a wise man, the seer who knows. Here knowledge, intelligence and wisdom are not merely intellectual but intuitive and insightful as well. The wise sage does not start

advising them directly. Instead he addresses their predicament indirectly as a wise counsellor would in this sort of a situation.

The sage replied to the king's query as follows. "Sir, every being has the knowledge of objects perceivable by the senses in various ways. Some beings are blind by day, and others are blind by night; some beings have equal sight both by day and night. Human beings are certainly endowed with knowledge, but they are not the only beings to be so endowed, for cattle, birds, animals and other creatures too cognise. The knowledge that men have, birds and beasts also have; and what they have men also possess; and the rest like eating and sleeping is common to both of them. Look at these birds, though they are themselves afflicted by hunger and are aware of it, because of delusion, they are engaged in feeding grains into the beaks of their young ones. Human beings too are, attached to their children expecting in return. Do you not see this?"

"Even so men are hurled into the whirlpool of attachment, the pit of delusion, through the power of Mahamaya the Great delusion, who makes the continuance of the cycle of worldly existence possible. Marvel not at this. This Mahamaya is the Yoganidra, the Superconscious sleep of Vishnu, the Lord of the world. It is by her the world is deluded. Verily she, the Bhagavati, the Mahamaya entangles humans into delusion forcibly drawing the minds of even the wise. She creates this entire universe, both moving and unmoving. It is she who, when propitious, grants the best to humans and shows the

way for their final liberation. She is the supreme knowledge, the cause of final liberation, and eternal; she is the cause of the bondage of transmigration (samsara) and the sovereign over all lords”.

The king said, “Venerable sir, who is that Devi whom you call Mahamaya? How did she come into being, and what is her sphere of action, O sage? What constitutes her nature? What is her form? Wherefrom did she originate? All that I wish to hear from you, O you supreme among the knowers of Brahman.” The seer replied, “That Goddess is eternal, without beginning. The entire world is her embodiment. By her all this is pervaded. Nevertheless she incarnates in manifold ways; hear it from me. Though she is eternal, she is said to be born in the world, whenever she manifests herself in order to accomplish the purposes of the devas.”

Thereafter the sage narrates the first myth related to the manifestation of the Devi in her universal form as Maya or YogaMaya. Here the Devi is central to the creation myth. She is the power that induces Lord Vishnu’s deep slumber on the waters of the cosmic ocean prior to the manifestation of the Universe, in its continuous cycles of manifestation and dissolution. Each such cycle of creative manifestation, sustenance and dissolution constitutes a Kalpa.

At the end of a Kalpa when the universe was one vast stretch of ocean with the waters of the deluge, the adorable Lord Vishnu was in a state of deep mystic sleep (yoganidra), stretched out on Adi Sesha the thousand hooded primal

serpent of Time. Two terrible demons Madhu and Kaitabha, sprung into being from the ear wax or waste (mala) of Vishnu's ears, and sought to slay Brahma, the father of beings. Brahma who is sitting in the lotus at Vishnu's navel, then extols the Great Goddess Yoganidra requesting her to withdraw from Vishnu so he may awaken and slay the demons.

This hymn by Brahma (Brahma-stuti), also known as the Tantrika Ratri Suktam is the first of the four famous hymns in the Devi Mahatmyam. The Devi is extolled by Brahma as the incomparable Goddess -Vishnu’s Yoganidra, the queen of cosmos, the supporter of the worlds, the cause of the sustenance and dissolution alike.

There upon, the Devi who herself causes delusion, withdrew herself from every part of Vishnu’s body, and appeared before Brahma, who takes birth from the Unmanifest. Released from the influence of YogaMaya, Lord Vishnu awoke and saw those two evil demons Madhu and Kaitabha, of exceeding power, with eyes red in anger, endeavouring to devour Brahma. Thereupon the all-pervading Lord Vishnu got up and fought with the two demons for five thousand years, using his own arms as weapons. The two demons, frenzied with their exceeding power, and deluded by Goddess Mahamaya, exclaimed to Vishnu, “Ask a boon from us”.

How intoxicating and blinding can power and strength be!

Lord Vishnu said “If you are satisfied with me, you must both be slain by me now. What need is there of any other boon

here?” The two demons thus bewitched by Mahamaya, gazing at the entire world turned into water, told the lotus eyed Lord Vishnu, “Slay us at the spot where the earth is not flooded with water”. Saying “Be it so”, Lord Vishnu, the great wielder of conch, discus and mace, took them on His loins and there severed their heads with His discus. Thus Mahamaya herself appeared when praised by Brahma.

Thus ends the first chapter - “The slaying of Madhu and Kaitabha” - of Devi Mahatmya in Markandeya Purana. The first chapter is the only chapter of the first episode. In this chapter the stage is set for the narration of the glory of the Goddess through another story, that of two losers-namely the king and the merchant. The slaying of Madhu and Kaitabha is also narrated in the same chapter by sage Medhas to the deposed king Suratha and the ruined merchant Samadhi.

Second Episode

Mahishasuramardhini

myth

This is the second episode where the same Adi Sakti manifests Herself as Durga and overcomes Mahishasura the buffalo headed demon who is half human and half beast. The demon is partly a pasu (animal or beast) and partly a human and thus has the dangerous ability to disrupt cosmic order and harmony. Overcoming this powerful combination of beastly nature and human competence requires a fiery and dynamic form of Shakti, one that can combat worldly rajas through divine rajas.

Technically the Primal form of the Mother that presides over Rajas is referred to as Maha Lakshmi whose coral complexion identifies Her clearly as the Devi's Rajasic vyashti. Mahishasura too is the epitome of Rajas. But unlike the Devi's divine rajas, Mahishasura's rajas is of a negative nature. His rajasic energy controls him and impels him to destructive acts, whereas Durga controls her own fiery splendor. She is an embodiment of the wrath of all the gods. Her rajas is

protective of her devotees and intent on destroying evil. Her anger is divine anger that fights the demons.

Of the three gunas only Rajas has two faces or two dimensions to it. One is a purely negative and gross expression that seeks material pleasures while the other is a divine and subtle expression that takes the individual inward, closer to the Supreme Being. Both are goal oriented except that demoniac rajas seeks only kama (desire or craving) and artha (material prosperity) while divine rajas seeks the fulfilment of righteous desires, all round divine prosperity and eventually moksha (the reference here is to the four goals of life). This difference in the direction of focus or goal is the main difference between the two types of rajas. Rajas can bridge Tamas and Sattva. Lower order Rajas is closer to Tamas, while higher order Rajas is closer to Sattva. Lower order Rajas serves the purpose of Tamas and is potentially in danger of pulling us into the quagmire of Tamas. Higher order Rajas serves the purpose of enabling Sattvavajaya or enabling Sattva to take over the other gunas.

Esoteric meaning of the battle between the gods and the demons.

First let us examine the theme of the battles between the gods and the demons as revealed in the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads and Adi Shankara's commentary. The word Sanskrit word for gods is 'devah', which denotes light or the function of illumining. Commenting on the verse "dev.sur.havaiyatrassa.yetire"

(Chandogya Upanishad, 1. 2. 1), Adi Shankara affirms that the gods stand for such functions of the senses (indriya vrttis) as are illumined by scriptures. The demons or asuras who are opposed to the gods, stand for tendencies that are opposite to the illumining functions, and are of the nature of darkness. Thus the war between the gods and the demons actually refers to the perpetual conflict between the forces of light and darkness, between righteous and unrighteous urges. Thus there are two opposing psychic forces within all of us. The roots of these two types of urges are traced to the Sanchita karmas of innumerable lives. While we experience only Prarabdha karmas allotted for a particular lifetime, the Sanchita karmas indirectly influence us as our samskaras.

Esoterically speaking the gods symbolise the positive samskaras of innumerable lifetimes resulting from all the righteous karmas that are oriented towards the Supreme Self, while the demons symbolise the negative samskaras of innumerable lifetimes resulting from all the unrighteous karmas that are contrary and in conducive to our orientation

to the Supreme Self. Thus interpreting the battles between the gods and demons on these lines is in order wherever references to the battles between the gods and the demons occur in the Vedas and the Puranas. The righteous and unrighteous samskaras have also been referred to as daiva sampada (divine wealth or divine tendencies) and asura sampada (demoniac wealth or demoniac tendencies) in the Bhagavad Gita (in the sixteenth chapter titled 'daivasura sampadvibhaga yogah'). Here Divine tendencies have been referred to as Divine wealth (sampada: wealth) and demoniac tendencies as demoniac wealth. Elaborating this idea further the Bhagavad Gita declares that the Divine are deemed for liberation or Self-realization and the demoniac for bondage.

Returning back to Mahishasura's myth, the Devi Mahatmyam tells us that long back when Mahishasura was the lord of asuras and Indra the lord of devas, there was a war between the devas and asuras for a full hundred years. Now that we know who the gods and demons are, it is not difficult to understand why the span of the war is for hundred years. This is the approximate upper limit of human life span. Thus the conflict between the righteous and unrighteous samskaras goes on as long as we are alive. And in that war, as the Devi Mahatmyam tells us, the army of the gods is vanquished by the mighty demons and Mahishasura becomes the lord of heaven. He himself assumes the jurisdictions of Surya, Indra, Agni, Vayu, Chandra, Yama and Varuna and of other gods too. Now what does this mean?

As already stated the gods are the presiding deities for various indriyas and their functions-Surya over eyes, Indra hands, Agni over speech, Vayu over skin, Chandra over the mind, Yama over anus, Varuna over tongue and so on. The gods stand for the respective indriya vrttis. All these senses and their functions are hijacked by Rajo-guna serving the purpose of nourishing asuric tendencies. This is the meaning of Mahishasura assuming lordship over all jurisdictions of the gods. Under the influence of Rajo-guna all psychological and sensory functions are focused only on the gross and the material, having lost the original orientation to the Supreme Being. The task, therefore, is to once again reclaim the original state. But this can be achieved only by uniting together all the powers of the gods and orienting them back to the Supreme Being. This is exactly what happens in the story.

The vanquished gods collectively surrendering to the Devi

The gods first approach Brahma who leads them to Vishnu and Shiva. There is a significance in the gods first approaching Brahma. As per Hindu mythology Brahma was born from a lotus that grew at Lord Vishnu's navel. Here Vishnu signifies Consciousness while the lotus signifies flowering or blossoming of Consciousness. Brahma being born from the nabhikamala (navel chakra) of Vishnu is clearly a Puranic allusion to Kundalini and the Chakras. The nabhi is the vedic equivalent to what is known as known as the Manipura chakra in the tantric system. Below the manipura chakra is asura kshetra (field of demoniac consciousness), while daiva kshetra (field of divine consciousness) starts from manipura. Thus the very awareness of the conflict between the righteous and unrighteous samskaras and the need to overcome asuric samskaras, starts with the manipura. Now that spiritual awareness has started blossoming it will lead to the coming together of all the spiritual samskaras, the coming together of the powers of the gods. Brahma leads the gods to Vishnu and Shiva. Vishnu and Shiva too symbolise specific psychological functions like the other gods. In the symbolism of Devi Mahatmyam, the Devi is obviously the Supreme Being or Supreme Self, whereas Vishnu and Shiva symbolise prana shakti and gnana shakti respectively.

What happens when all the powers of all the gods come together? As the Devi Mahatmyam reveals, all the radiance from all the gods coalesced into the auspicious form of the

Goddess. The tejas that emerges from the gods is not their creation but the Devi's natural indwelling presence. Thus what coalesces into the Devi's auspicious form is actually Her own power. The gods do not relinquish their power or weapons, even as their varied powers reunite in the Devi. This is a sublime philosophical abstraction of simultaneous divine immanence and transcendence. Now that the collective power of the gods is united against Mahishasura and his armies, the gods can be assured of their inevitable victory.

Mahishasura and his Generals-Rajo-guna and its Asura sampada Mahishasura symbolises the powerful combination of human competence and beastly nature. As already stated he stands for Rajo-guna. While Kaitabha is also rajas, he comes as a twin of Madhu (tamas), at the level of origination. Unlike Kaitabha who is of the nature of rajas, Mahishasura is the epitome of Rajo-guna. He has sixteen asuras who lead various battalions of armies. They stand for various demoniac traits or tendencies and are Mahishasura's assets or wealth. Together they are all asura sampada or demoniac wealth or assets (see the chapter on Daiva sampada and Asura sampada for more).

If Mahishasura has to be subdued his generals have to be eliminated first, his demoniac wealth has to be destroyed first. But the asura armies vastly outnumber the gods. Commenting on the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad's (1, 3) account of a similar conflict between the gods and the demons Adi Shankara tells us that the gods are always less in number while the demons are more. So what to do? There is only one way out-absolute

surrender to the Supreme Goddess. Nothing less than total surrender will bail them out of their difficulty. And this is precisely what the gods do.

As already stated if Mahishasura has to be subdued his generals have to be eliminated first, his demoniac wealth has to be destroyed first. Hence the Goddess and her lion start destroying these asuras one by one. While each of the sixteen asura generals and their esoteric significance is important in its own way, two among them deserve special mention-

Durdhara and Durmukha who fight till the last. Only after Durdhara and Durmukha are destroyed can the Goddess finally fight the asura lord Mahishasura. In fact they find place even in the Mahishasuramardhini stotram ('durdharadharaii durmukhamarii hararate'). Such is their negative significance for spiritual life.

If Mahishasura is Rajas, Durdhara and Durmukha are 'desire' and 'anger'. As the Bhagavad Gita (3. 37) affirms, Rajas begets desire and anger. In fact most often anger is related to desire. When the fulfilment of desire (Kama) is frustrated by an obstacle, frustration turns into anger (Krodha). Desire itself is rooted in Rajas and aggravates it further. In fact 'Durdhara' literally means 'irresistible' while 'Durmukha' means ugly or hideous or bad faced. True enough it is very difficult to resist desire, while anger transforms the most beautiful face into a hideous one! ('Durmukha' can also mean 'bad-mouthed' or 'abusive' which too denotes anger) Desire is by nature insatiable and is the most important of the six inner enemies

(arishadvargas) along with its comrade-Anger (Krodha). Since Rajas begets desire and anger, they are the last to go before Rajas. That is why they fight till the last. Once desire is eliminated, Sattva guna (the Divine forces of Light) can easily prevail over Rajo guna.

However do not underestimate Mahishasura (Rajo-guna) and his army. Rajo guna (Mahishasura) and its associated vrttis (Mahishasura's armies) wield great power over the psyche. They are the result of the impressions of innumerable lifetimes and choices made in those lives, choices that have become embedded in our psyche as stubborn psychological traits. To make matters worse most of us waste away this precious life without any conscious awareness of what is happening within. As the Bhagavad Gita (7. 19) reveals, it is only at the end of innumerable births that the wise person takes refuge in the Supreme Being, realising that the Supreme Being is all that is. And rare is such a great soul. Most of us carry on with our deluded lives without realising that life is not just about relationships, money, power and material pursuits. For the majority spiritual life is only an extension of the deep-rooted material approach. Even those who are interested have only a shallow interest, quite often it being a mere coping mechanism for the stress of daily living. For some spirituality is a pursuit that they reserve for their old age, for their retired lives.

Compelled by our asuric tendencies we waste the best time of our lives pursuing purely material goals, wasting away our greatest potential, postponing it continually. It is only a few

wise ones who awaken to the truth that the Supreme Being is all that is, that have a conscious awareness of the war between the gods and the demons. Bringing this inner conflict into conscious awareness, the serious practitioner surrenders completely to the Supreme Goddess just as the gods did in the Devi Mahatmyam. Progressively the gods are reinstated in their rightful place by the replacement of asuric wealth with divine wealth. This needs the grace of Mahalakshmi who can bestow daiva sampada or divine wealth to Her devotee. The practitioner who is endowed with divine wealth is now fit for attaining liberation. Even if one does not attain liberation in this birth, the samskaras and the merit acquired during this lifetime are carried in a potential form into the next lives when they shall bear fruit automatically. However for those who are unwavering from the goal the accumulation of divine wealth shall set them free in this very life. Spiritual victory is in sight.

Mahishasura's eightfold fury

Returning back to Mahishasura's myth, seeing his armies destroyed by the Devi an enraged Mahishasura starts terrifying the Devi's hosts. And how does Mahishasura destroy the Devi's forces-in eight ways. These eight ways are the purely negative expression of rajas. Hitting some by muzzle, trampling some by the hooves, lashing at some with his tail, tearing others with his horns, by sheer speed, by bellowing, by wheeling, and by the blast of his breath, Mahishasura destroyed the Devi's forces. This eightfold unleashing of Mahishasura's rajas is comparable to eightfold maithuna or eightfold sexual union, which a Brahmachari is strictly advised to avoid. Here a word on Brahmacharya is in order.

Brahmacharya means to move, learn and live in the 'Way of Brahman or higher Awareness'. 'Conducting oneself in higher awareness' is not just about sexual continence, not just about controlling sexual desire but about also about gaining mastery over all the indriyas. Among other things it is also largely about bringing the indriyas (senses) under effortless control. Thus one of the goals of Brahmacharya is reaching a state where one is not troubled by the indriyas anymore. However this state of freedom from the indriyas comes effortlessly only after intense practice or abhyasa. Till one achieves effortless mastery over the indriyas one has to make intense efforts. Hence initially we are advised to avoid eightfold indulgence of the indriyas. The eight ways of sensual indulgence: Smaranam (thinking of it), Kirtanam (talking of it), Keli (playing around),

Prekshanam (seeing), Guhya-bhashanam (talking in secrecy), Sankalpa (wishing for), Adhyavasaya (determination towards), Kriyanishpatti (actual accomplishment). These are the eight ways in which Rajas destroys the divine forces before one can even gauge its destructive influence. That is why the unleashing of Mahishasura's rajas too has eightfold fury. After destroying the Devi's forces by his eightfold rajas, Mahishasura rushes forward to slay her lion. The Goddess Ambika becomes enraged at this.

The lion as the sadhaka who has taken to the path of dharma

The lion is none other than the sadhaka who has taken to the path of dharma. It is none other than the practitioner, the jiva, you and me. Since the devotee has already surrendered to the Goddess and is on the path of dharma, the Mother will protect him as her own child. Now starts the real fight between the Devi and the lord of the asuras. To meet the challenge the Goddess heightens Her own rajas. However unlike Mahishasura's destructive and egoistic rage Her anger is divine or righteous anger that counters demoniac or unrighteous anger. Initially the practitioner counters lower order material rajas through higher order spiritual rajas. One has to remove a thorn with the help of another thorn, as the adage goes. We come across instances of the lion's fury too, in both the second and third episodes though more elaborately in the third episode. This is the sadhaka's spiritualized higher order rajas or sattvic rajas which counters the destructive influence of material lower order rajas of the asuras. The two faces of rajas is an interesting theme that the Devi Mahatmyam portrays time and again through powerful metaphors.

Mahishasura changing his form many times before finally being beheaded

During the combat Mahishasura changes his form many times, undergoing a series of metamorphosis. This is the very nature of desire, of rajas. We think that we have rooted out a particular psychological compulsion only to discover that it still existent albeit in a different form. We move from one addiction to another, from one compulsive behaviour to another, as long as the original inner emotional issue is not resolved. The Devi's weapons appear ineffectual as long as Mahishasura keeps changing forms. She triumphs over him only when he emerges in his original form, as She pins him down under her foot. Only then does She behead him finally with Her sword, destroying the deadly combination of human competence and beastly nature.

Mahishasura's episode reveals that through active struggle, through divine rajas, we can overcome enslavement to the indriyas, and live righteously in harmony with the world. It also reveals to us the two faces of rajas and the two kinds of wealth that we may seek in our lives. One is divine while the other is demoniac. Those who seek demoniac wealth take to the purely negative and demoniac expression of rajas and are deemed to be bound further and to suffer in the quagmire of perpetual desire, while those who take to a positive expression of rajas seek divine wealth and are eventually deemed for liberation from suffering of all kinds.

Third Episode

By the time we come to the third episode the demons are more complex and subtler. This time the chief demons are Sumbha (Asmita: “I”/ “Me”, the pseudo-self) and Nisumbha (Mamata: “Mine”, the attachment to things that the false self clings to) who along with their generals Canda (pra-vritti or extraverted psychic energy), Munda (ni-vritti or introverted psychic energy), Dhumralochana (distorted perception) and Raktabija (citta vrttis or incessant compulsive thought processes), are a formidable force to reckon with. Overcoming these subtler demons requires a luminous, benevolent and beautiful manifestation, one that can enlighten and liberate. This is the manifestation as Maha Sarasvati predominated by Sattva.

This myth too has a familiar beginning. Two demons, named Shumbha and Nishumbha, have dispossessed the gods, stripped them of their powers and appropriated their wealth and privilege. Then the gods go to mount Himalaya and extol

the Unvanquished Aparajita Devi recalling Her assurance that She would intervene whenever remembered in times of misfortune. Synchronistically Parvati devi comes there at the same time to bathe in the waters of Ganga and enquires innocently as to whom the gods are extolling. An auspicious form of the Goddess, Kaushiki, emanates from the selfsame Parvati and answers that the hymn is addressed to her. Parvati becomes dark and is henceforth known as Kalika or Kali. She will play major role in the future course of events along with the auspicious form of Ambika. Thus the Goddess has two forms-one auspicious and the other terrible. Parvati's two forms remind us of Shiva who too has a terrible form as Rudra apart from his usual auspicious form. This twofold complementary nature of Divinity as both the auspicious and the terrible highlights the play of light and dark. Both are aspects of the Supreme Being.

There are two other interesting phenomenon at work here. First is the phenomenon of Synchronicity. Parvati seems to come there by coincidence. Though seemingly a coincidence her arrival then and there is very meaningful. Meaningful coincidences are what Synchronicity is about. Synchronicity is behind not only oracular prognostication but also how prayers work. At times Divine intervention can be direct, displaying a seemingly causal relation to prayers and mantras. At other times Divine intervention occurs in a non-causal synchronistic manner. Either ways prayers work. Most importantly we are connected to everything else around us. Our minds and lives

are not separate from the minds and lives of others in the universe. There is underlying indivisible holistic unity.

Secondly Parvati's innocent query suggests that she is not aware of what is happening, at least consciously. But surely, as an embodiment of the Supreme Goddess, wouldn't She be consciously aware? Though not conscious, the emanation of Kaushiki who answers Parvati is Her own Shakti, a projection of Her own unconscious powers. At an individual conscious level we have limited powers, limited by embodiment in a mind-body that constrain the otherwise unbounded and limitless reservoir of all powers. At an unconscious level we are potentially connected to the collective. There is oneness and abundant potential at this level. But in our normal waking state of consciousness we are largely unaware of our unbounded potential and our connection to the collective. In other states of consciousness such as dream, deep sleep and meditation we are better connected to this level. One may argue that this particular context in the Devi Mahatmyam involves the Goddess not a human being. However remember that everything about the gods and demons has relevance for us, for what happens in our own psyche.

The Supreme Goddess is the Mother of the Universe, identical with the Brahman of Vedanta, and with the Atman of Yoga. But this is at the transcendental level. No doubt the Goddess is the Supreme Self, but She is also the collective Self. At the relative and phenomenal level, where there is awareness of one's own individual personality or ego, even Her manifestations follow the same law, the same order that is

seen in the rest of the universe. The various emanations of the Goddess combine both the transcendental and phenomenal levels of truth to varying degrees. It may not be inappropriate to suggest that while ultimately at the transcendental level She is the Supreme Self or Brahman, in her manifestations as other goddesses She is also the Transcendental in the Phenomenal. In other words She is the Transcendental, She is the Phenomenal and She is also the Transcendental in the Phenomenal. This is the uniqueness of the Shakta world-view. Sri Ramakrishna describes how the relative or phenomenal emerges from the absolute or transcendental and falls back into it. Brahman may be compared to an infinite ocean, without beginning or end. Just as, some portions of the ocean freeze into ice through intense cold, and formless water appears to have form, so through intense love or faith of the devotee, Brahman appears to take on form and personality. But the form melts away again as the sun of Knowledge rises. Then the universe also disappears, and there is nothing but Brahman.

The beautiful and auspicious Kaushiki form of the Goddess is all Sattva. Unlike the slayer of Mahishasura who is the collective embodiment of the divine anger or divine rajas of all the gods, Kaushiki is a Sattvic manifestation. This time the demons are even more sophisticated. Action, contemplation and knowledge are the three stages through which we have to pierce through the veil of Prakriti or three Gunas. Madhu-Kaitabha are the mala (dirt or waste) from Vishnu's ears and thereby predominantly represent Tamas. Mahishasura and

his generals represent Rajo-guna. But Shumbha-Nishumbha and their generals represent the limitation of buddhi, which is another name for sattva. The word sattva also denotes the mind apart from the guna of sattva. It is easy to understand why one has to overcome tamas and rajas as it is accepted that they are manasika doshas. But why is there a need to transcend even Sattva, one might ask. As described in the commentary on the first episode, the three gunas are part of the same cosmic process of manifestation, they are part of the same veiling power of Prakrti or Maha Maya. Together they form the three strands that bind us to ignorance. Since Sattva is potentially akin to a burnt rope, since it brings knowledge, initially the ascendancy of sattva is preferred over tamas and rajas. A rope that will sooner or later be burnt cannot bind us for long. But till it is fully burnt even this rope can be binding. We will examine this further using another analogy-that of a lantern. But first let us understand Shumbha and Nishumbha.

The root word 'bha' in the names of Shumbha and Nishumbha means 'light'. However their light is not real like the light from the sun. It is merely reflected light. Just as Sun represents the self and light in astrological language, Moon represents the mind and reflected light. Sattva is another name for the mind. Buddhi is the highest function of the mind. However buddhi is not the same as the Self or Atman. Shumbha is none other than 'Asmita' (sense of 'I' or 'Me'), the pseudo-self that identifies the self with non-self whereas Nisumbha represents Mamata (sense of 'Mine'), or the attachment to things that the false self clings to through identification with other objects.

Nishumbha is the brother of Shumbha. One follows the other closely. Where there is this sense of 'I' automatically there will be a sense of 'mine' as an extension of the false sense of selfhood. That is why Shumbha and Nishumbha are inseparable brothers.

Patanjali (Yogasutra, 2.6) defines 'Asmita' as "dgdarsanasaktyorekatmatevasmita". 'Dg' is the Seer or Purusha or Pure Consciousness. 'Darsanasakti' denotes 'the power of observing', which is none other than Buddhi or 'intellect'. 'Ekatmata' means identifying as one. In other words 'Asmita' is the ignorance or mistake of identifying Buddhi as Purusha or Atman. In other words misidentification of the mind as the Self gives rise to a false sense of self. This false sense of self is 'Asmita'. Although it may seem that buddhi and purusha are identical, in reality they are not. This can be illustrated using the analogy of a lantern. If the Self is the wick or the source of light, buddhi is the glass chimney. From a distance though it appears as if the glass chimney is the source of the light, close observation will reveal the burning wick as the true source of light. Likewise a yogi whose consciousness is functioning beyond the manomaya kosha, knows that the mind is not identical with the Self as his consciousness has awakened to the level of the vignanamaya kosha.

Buddhi is the instrument of intelligence that discerns, questions, reasons, determines and wills. Though buddhi is the highest faculty of the human mind and possesses the potential power of divine revelation, it is still a limited

manifestation of consciousness. Buddhi is also an evolute of Prakrti and thus cannot be identical to Purusha or Consciousness. The mind when viewed through the distorting lens of Avidya or ignorance, becomes the basis for a false sense of identity. This pseudo selfhood is 'Asmita'. The basis for 'asmita' is a false notion that buddhi is identical to the Atman. However an acutely focused Sattvic buddhi is very helpful in reflecting Self/Consciousness just as a clear chimney can transmit the light of the wick very clearly.

Since sattvic intellect can reflect the light of Consciousness clearly, it also poses the danger of an aspirant falsely thinking that he has attained the Atman, that he is Self-realized. A sattvic and refined intellect is undoubtedly very important for reflective thinking and discernment. However that is not the end of the path. Such a sattvic buddhi is of tremendous value in overcoming the tyranny of tamas and rajas. So in the earlier stages sattva is glorified. That which was desirable in the earlier stages in the past is detrimental in the present. Now even Sattva is an obstacle.

If tamas can be compared to a brick wall and rajas to stormy winds that toss about the mind in a tempest, sattva is like a glass wall. One can see through a glass wall, but cannot walk through. What we see through the glass wall helps us in inferring the presence of the light on the other side. But to reach or merge with the source of the light one has to eventually overcome the glass wall too. This is where buddhi too fails. Moreover the false sense of selfhood at this stage can lead to subtler demons such as pride of knowledge, false pride

in having attained the self, false sense of immortality, all arising from knowledge that is not truly ultimate. One starts taking pride in one's sadhana. In the place of pride in material riches, pride in spiritual riches starts swelling the ego. Earlier the pride was grosser, easily detectable and thereby easier to accept. Spiritual pride is subtler, not easily detected and hard to accept.

In a way the aspirant at this stage has some achievements to his credit compared to others who are still struggling with grosser issues related to tamas or rajas. However as long as the klesas continue to afflict an individual suffering is a definite possibility. Asmita along with the sense of Mamatva, is among the five causes of suffering. Total freedom from suffering is not possible as long as there is this sense of 'I' and 'mine' which becomes the focal point for all citta vrttis. The tyranny of Shumbha and Nishumbha is subtler compared to the tyranny of Mahishasura. Moreover Mahishasura did not seek the hand of the Devi, did not talk of marrying the Goddess. He just rushed to war compulsively, compelled by his fiery rajas. But Shumbha and Nishumbha being more advanced asuras, having some light in their nature, at least in so far as their ability to show at least reflected light, mistake that they are equal to the Goddess or even superior. That is why they confidently court a marriage proposal. But first how do they come to know of the Goddess? Through Chanda and Munda. What do these two asuras denote? Chanda means 'fierce' or 'passionate' while Munda denotes a 'shaved head'.

Generally a shaved head is symbolic of vairagya or withdrawal. Vairagya can be true dispassion or it can also be sensitive withdrawal due to a bad experience. In the latter case it is not genuine vairagya but only withdrawal due to hurt, a negative reaction to an unpleasant experience. Here Munda being an asura, denotes reactive withdrawal from things that have been a source of suffering, not genuine vairagya. Chanda denotes 'passionate pursuit' while Munda denotes sensitive 'introverted withdrawal'. Here two specific behaviours have been selected to represent pra-vrtti and ni-vrtti, the two patterns of psychological and behavioural functioning. These two are the most common patterns of behaviour. One is hot pursuit of whatever is deemed attractive to the senses while the other is a sensitive withdrawal from those that hurt from past experience. These are the two principle movements of 'Asmita' the false sense of identity. One movement is outward exertion (pra-vrtti) while the other is inward withdrawal (ni-vrtti). Asmita reacts to external objects (be it people or material things) in one of these two manners. If my past experience or impression of the person or object is pleasant I pursue passionately. If it was unpleasant or hurtful I withdraw due to hurt, or in extreme cases I may develop intense dislike or hatred for the person or object. Thus pursuit and withdrawal are actually behavioural expressions or reactionary patterns to citta vrttis that trigger these two movements. Our responses to things or people fit into either of these patterns to varying degrees depending on the object in front of us. This is the symbolism of Chanda

(Pravrtti or Extroverted Pursuit) and Munda (Introverted Withdrawal).

Note: Chanda and Munda as Pra-vrtti and Ni-vrtti are not the same as Extraversion and Introversion. Extraversion and Introversion are psychological tendencies that are neither positive nor negative whereas the symbolism of Chanda and Munda is related more to raga (infatuation or attachment) and dvesha (aversion or dislike), which are among the five afflicting kleshas in Yoga psychology.

It is Chanda and Munda who see the Devi first and carry this news to Shumbha. They tell Shumbha about the beautiful goddess whose radiance illuminates the Himalayas. They flatter Shumbha with an account of his riches and powers, all stolen from the gods. Playing upon Shumbha's vanity, they suggest that he who is all-wealthy and all-powerful surely must also possess this jewel among women. There is a misconception that pravrtti should be eschewed. At this level of sadhana we realise that nothing is good or bad in itself. Even those that are deemed negative can be transformed to serve us positively. This is the Shakta approach. "One must rise by that which one falls" as tantra affirms. Chanda and Munda are asuric as long as they serve Asmita, the false self. But it is the selfsame Chanda and Munda, the two movements of vrttis that initially turn our attention to the Devi (the Supreme Self). the same pravrtti that can pull us into bondage can initially attract us towards liberation, towards self-realisation, though initially only as another goal to be sought. Likewise the same nivrtti that repels us from things that can

cause suffering can bring true detachment or dispassion or genuine vairagya. As long as pravrtti and nivrtti serve the false self (Shumbha), they manifest as Raga (infatuation) and Dvesha (aversion), as Canda and Munda the two asuras. As already stated it is 'Pravrtti-Nivrtti' or the movement of citta vrttis that initially attracts us to self-realization, though as one more jewel to be sought. That is why Chanda and Munda bring news of the Devi (Supreme Self) who illuminates the Himalayas (gross body).

Parvati taking abode in the Himalayas suggests that the gross body is not an inert thing but the abode of the Self that illumines the mind-body. Even the gods come down to the Himalayas to extol the Divine Self. The mountain is not just an immovable lifeless object but the abode of the immovable Self, the unchanging consciousness. The goddess (Self) illumines not just the Himalayas (body) but the entire universe. Canda and Munda try to tempt Shumbha by telling him that there is something beyond buddhi. Though they haven't recognised the Devi (Self) entirely they are right in their initial impressions that She is unsurpassable, a jewel among the best jewels, one to be truly sought. All other riches and beauties pale in comparison to the Devi (Self). Though they are drawn to the Goddess they haven't yet recognised Her Divinity. Now that Shumbha's inherent craving to accumulate the best of everything has been kindled, he wishes to claim her as his own, just as we want to possess all that we find attractive and desirable.

Shumbha first sends the smooth talking messenger Sugriva to court her. But is it possible to realise the Self only through intelligent words? No. But that is what we do after acquiring some knowledge. Mere eloquence or knowledge of the scriptures cannot bridge the gap between the Self and the false self. The Devi asks for nothing less than a combat between the Self (Devi) and the false self (Shumbha). Obviously the false self stands no chance. He would die at her hands. Indirectly the Devi is asking for nothing less than a sacrifice of the pseudo-self. How can one obtain the Supreme Self without the death of the false self? As expected the smooth talking Sugriva fails. Then he changes his tactics. He threatens to drag her by the hair. By sheer habit, we attempt to grab even the Self by the same worldly tactics. If smooth talking and diplomacy fail, we resort to force! Grabbing the Devi by the hair is also reminiscent of our initial approach to spirituality. Initially we pull the new found jewel of divinity into the world as if it were another thing to be possessed! We see it as one more resource, like any other worldly resource. Instead of rising to the level of the Self, we try to pull the spiritual to the level of the material world. But none of this will work.

Next, Shumbha sends Dhumralochana to fetch the Devi, kicking and screaming if need be. Dhumralochana means 'one of smoky vision', thus denoting distorted perception. Can distorted perception succeed? False knowledge arising from faulty thinking or distorted perception disappears instantaneously in the presence of the Self (Devi) just as

darkness cannot exist in the presence of light. A mere humkara of the Devi is enough to kill Dhumralochana. And this is what happens precisely.

When Dhumralochana's brute force fails, Shumbha loses all reason and sends Chanda and Munda with a huge army to bring back "that vile woman" in any way or in any condition whatever. Notice how Shumbha who was infatuated by "the jewel among women" now hates "that vile woman." This is how raga (infatuation) and dvesha (aversion) are related to each other. That which is very desirable today can become despicable tomorrow! This is the work of raga-dvesha, this is the work of Chanda-Munda! Though Canda and Munda initially act as afflictors, there is a possibility that one can sublimate their energies into friendly energies. Instead of serving the false self (Shumbha) Chanda and Munda can be made to serve the Supreme Self. But they have to be killed first before they lose their asuric identity. Death at the hands of Kali is symbolic of transformation. Once transformed by the fiery power of Kali they cease to be asuras. Thereafter they are merely an expression of our psychological energies, neutral energies that take the colour of our thoughts/emotions.

It is neither pravrtti nor nivrtti that is the problem. Yoga is the restraint or stilling of citta vrttis ("yogascittavttinirodha%", Yogasutra, 1. 2). And how can we achieve this stilling of citta vrttis-only through constant practice and genuine detachment (vairagya), by constant practice (abhyasa) of non-reactivity (vairagya) (abhyasavairagyabhya. tannirodha%, Yogasutra, 1.

12). Here is the key to the transformation of Canda and Munda. The power of pravrtti is channelized as abhyasa while nivrtti can become true vairagya. This is how one can kill Canda and Munda and transform their energies. In order to accomplish Goddess Ambika projects the terrible Kali from her own angry countenance.

Kali devours the armies of demons, falling upon them impetuously and slaughtering the powerful demons. Devouring some, crushing others, chewing most frightfully with her teeth, she pounds the entire army of the mighty and wicked asuras. The image of grinding teeth that is invoked thrice (7.11, 7.13, 7.15) reminds us of the wheel of Time (Kalachakra) that grinds all things to dust. Except for a change of gender Kali is none other than Kala, who is described by Arjuna in the vision of the cosmic form in the Bhagavad Gita (11. 24-31). Lord Krishna further confirms it by affirming that he himself is the world destroying Kala engaged in destroying the world (kalo'smi lokakayaktpravddho lokansamahartumiha pravtta%, 11. 32). Thus Kali is the same as Kala.

Kali accomplishes Her mission by severing the heads of Canda and Munda and delivering them to Chandika who is none other than Ambika. Since Kali brought the heads of Canda and Munda as battle trophies to the auspicious Chandika, Kali is henceforth famous as Chamunda. The destruction of Chanda and Munda needed the terrible Kali. But Shumbha and Nishumbha being more subtler spin-offs of intellect (buddhi) and ignorance (avidya), the auspicious and sattvic

form of the Goddess is need to liberate them. That is why Kali tells Ambika, “In this sacrifice of battle, here have I brought you the heads of Chanda and Munda the great beasts. Shumbha and Nishumbha, you shall yourself slay.” Once again we have the Goddess talking to Herself as both the terrible as well as auspicious forms are two different aspects of the selfsame Mother Goddess.

Upon news of the loss of two of his servants Canda and Munda, Shumbha marshals vast numbers of asuric hosts, clan by clan. Totally there are eight clans of demons who are marshalled by Shumbha. They are Udayudhas, Kambus, Kotiviryas, Dhaumras, Kalakas, Daurhrdas, Mauryas and the Kalakeyas. The eight asura clans represent the eight pasas. Pasa means ‘bond’. According to Tantra Jiva or individual consciousness is bound by eight bonds or pasas. Jiva is limited by various constraints (kanchukas) and ashta pasas (eight bonds). When jiva becomes free of these constraints and limiting bonds, one becomes Shiva. One who is bound by Pasa (bond) is Jiva, while one who is free of the Pasas is Sadashiva (“Pasa Yukta Bhavet Jiva Pasa Mukta Sadashiva”). Sadhana is aimed at liberating individual consciousness (jiva) from these bonds. The boundless Consciousness is limited by these eight bonds giving rise to a false sense of self or ‘Asmita’. That is why Shumbha (Asmita) calls upon the eight asura clans to fight on his behalf. This is the significance of the eight clans of asuras. The eight asura clans and the eight pasas or bonds are given below.

Asura Sampradaya Corresponding Ashta Pasa or Eight Bonds
Udayudhas ghrna: contempt Kambus lajja: shame Kotiviryas bhaya: fear Dhaumras shanka: doubt Kalakas jugupsa: disgust Daurhrdas kula: family, caste or group identity that becomes restrictive Mauryas shila: pride in one’s morality that makes one judgmental towards others Kalakeyas jati: racial identity that leads to false pride and sense of superiority

Though some of the above bonds appear harmless on the face of it, potentially they can all be very restrictive and harmful. Some of these bonds such as fear, doubt, contempt and disgust are limiting influences on our consciousness and its expression. The remaining bonds such as group identity, racial identity and pride in one’s morality lead to arrogance or a false sense of superiority over others. These eight bonds contribute to as well as sustain the false self. Unlike grosser demoniac traits like anger and greed that the aspirant can recognise more easily, the eight pasas are subtler and influence even those who have achieved some success in sadhana. Even those who are at a relatively more advanced state and have some achievements to their credit, can fall prey to these eight binding factors. One doesn’t have to be predominantly rajasic or tamasic to fall prey to the influence of the eight pasas. Even sattvic people can slip into these limited ways of thinking or living. Pride in one’s family, birth, race, spiritual lineage, morality, sense of shame, fear, doubt, contempt or disgust towards other spiritual approaches, are all highly limiting and can cause closed thinking. This is the tyranny of the eight clans of demons. To counter these eight

asuric forces, Chandika (the Supreme Self) calls forth seven Shaktis. These seven Shaktis along with Kali counter the eight clans of asuras.

As the armies of the demons encircle Her, the Goddess multiplies Her forces calling forth seven Shaktis, who are seven aspects of our own consciousness. Thus Chandika and Kali, the twin aspects of the Goddess fighting the asuras, are now joined by the seven Shaktis of Brahma, Shiva, Kumara/Skanda, Vishnu, Indra, Varaha and Narasimha. There issued forth Chandika's own terrifying Shakti, who came to be known as Shivaduti since she sent Lord Shiva himself as her messenger to the asura lords. Together the nine Shaktis destroy the mighty asuras in no time. Who are these goddesses? Each goddess presides over a particular aspect of our consciousness and is linked to a graha (planet) in astrology. The nine Goddesses and their functions as aspects of Consciousness are given below.

Goddess or Shakti	Graha	Aspect or Function of Consciousness
Chandika or Her Shakti 'Shivaduti'	Sun	Soul or Self
Maheshwari	Moon	Mind
Narasimhi	Mars	Will
Vaishnavi	Mercury	
Brahmani	Jupiter	
Aindri or Indrani	Venus	
Kali or Chamunda	Saturn	
Varahi	Rahu	
Kaumari	Ketu	

The asura clans have been killed. The eight pasas have been cut asunder. Even Chanda and Munda are dead. With both Chanda (Pra-vrtti) and Munda (Ni-vrtti) dead, with both the outward and inward movements of citta vrttis having ceased, what remains to be done is only the stilling of the citta vrttis. Raktabija, who strides onto the battlefield after the death of Chanda and Munda, is none other than the citta vrttis. That Raktabija is symbolic of citta vrttis, becomes clear when we examine his unique power-whenver a drop of his blood falls to earth, another demon of identical size and strength springs up. In the battle, innumerable demons proliferate from Raktabija's spilt blood, terrorising and bewildering the gods. This is the nature of citta vrttis or thought processes. Each vrtti leads to one more as thoughts multiply in geometric progression. The same is true of desire too. Though the gods are bewildered by the ever-multiplying citta vrttis, Durga laughs knowingly. Is it better to conquer one desire by nipping it in the bud or to satisfy a thousand desires? This is a serious question that every aspirant needs to reflect over at some stage or the other.

Desire makes us human but it is also the source of all suffering. Desire is in the mind, as mental activity, as thoughts, as citta vrttis. When desire takes centre stage we often sit and watch helplessly wondering what we can do. How do we release from the endless cycle of desire, gratification or frustration? The gods too are bewildered and frustrated by the ever-multiplying Raktabija. Ambika knows the greatest truth of Yoga. Yoga is the stilling of citta vrttis

(Yogasutra 1. 2). The best and only efficient method is to overcome the first desire, or first thought, rather than have to fight a thousand more. Conquering the original desire will release us from this endless cycle of desire, gratification, disillusionment and frustration. The all knowing Candika instructs Kali to roam about on the battlefield quickly drinking the spilt drops of Raktabija's blood as she attacked him. As Kali drank Raktabija's blood simultaneously devouring the newly born demons who sprang from his spilt blood, the bloodless Raktabija died promptly. Finally, only two demons remain-Shumbha and Nishumbha.

Shumbha and Nishumbha are the inseparable brothers. In a long battle sequence, the Goddess fights one-on-one first with Nishumbha, then with Shumbha, and again with Nishumbha. Nishumbha's character is not highlighted much so far apart from him being the younger brother of Shumbha, as dear as life itself to Shumbha. If Shumbha is 'Asmita' the false sense of self, Nishumbha is 'mamatva' or 'mamata'. Nishumbha is as dear as life itself to Shumbha because the identity of 'Asmita' the false sense of self, is shaped by its attachment (mamata) to body-mind, possessions, family and social roles, group affiliations, identity and beliefs too, among other adjuncts (upadhis). An upadhi is a defining attribute, a limiting qualification, a substitute, anything that maybe mistaken for something else. Thus while Shumbha represents subjective ego-awareness, Nishumbha represents the attachment to all its objective attributes. The Devi's battle sequence with the asura brothers is the inner conflict between the boundless Self

and the limited sense of self or the subjective and limited notion of identity. Being inextricably linked the two demon brothers 'Asmita' and 'mamatva' fight, one rising up when the other is knocked out. If it is not 'Me' it is about 'Mine'. If it is not about 'Me' it could be about 'My' children or spouse or family or country or religion. But in the final reckoning, all this is of little value. As already explained earlier although it may seem that buddhi and purusha are identical, in reality they are not. The Self (Atman) is not the same as non-self (anatman). It is ignorance (avidya) that gives rise to the mistaken notion that the non-self is identical to the Self. Avidya is so powerful, pervasive and subtle, and is the root of all other kleshas. It is avidya that makes us mistake buddhi, which is also an upadhi, for the Self.

All these are appearances mistaken for reality-this is the actual definition for an upadhi. It becomes clear, when Nishumbha, in spite of all his apparent grandeur, is knocked senseless to the ground. Even so, he rises up in desperation, as a monster with ten thousand arms, suggestive of desperate grasping or clinging to the countless fragments of all that one considers as one's own, the countless notions of 'mine' that sustain the notion of a separate self, that only serves to separate us from the Infinite One. This desperate instinctive grasping or clinging to the attachments of the limited self or ego-awareness is the final klesha, Abhinivesha. Abhinivesha is the most basic attachment to life that all living beings instinctually possess. It manifests as fear of death, as fear of death of one's individual existence, as fear of death of one's

individuality, as fear that desperately clings to the innumerable fragments of non-self as the Self. All this is because of the misidentification of the Self with the ever-changing Prakrti or material nature.

As the Goddess (Self) penetrates the ten thousand armed monster's (Abhinivesha's) heart, the demon's essence appears one final time, pleading for the Goddess to stop, indicating how unrelentingly one clings because of this klesha. However no upadhi can last truly till the end before the Devi's sword of knowledge (gnana). Finally as She slays him, only Shumbha is left all alone, stripped of all the false things that he has identified himself with all along. With no other support Shumbha, the false self has to battle it out alone. The first six verses of the tenth chapter drive home the crux of the entire third episode.

Shumbha addresses the Devi as Durga (10.3), reminding us that She is the selfsame Goddess who killed Mahishasura earlier on in the second episode. Shumbha, the false self, is based on the erroneous notion of multiplicity and individuality. Shumbha sees only multiplicity and cannot recognise the unity of all existence. Perplexed by the multiple names used to refer to the Goddess-Devi, Chandika, Ambika, Kali, Chamunda, Brahmani, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Narasimhi, Aindri and a host of other names throughout the text, one might possibly forget that there is only one Goddess in the entire narrative. Shumbha too fails to recognise that the Devi is indeed one without a second. He refuses to recognise the unity of all existence as he

chides Her for depending on the strength of others.

Thereupon the Devi reveals that she is one without a second, saying “I alone exist in this universe. Who else is there besides me?” (10.5). This is the great dictum, the Mahavakya of the Devi Mahatmyam.

Following this proclamation of divine unity, She affirms that the many manifestations, are but projections of Her own power, as are all other forms she inhabits (10. 8). The truth of infinite Being and Oneness cannot be appreciated by the false self, for how can the false or individual self exist if it can realise Oneness? How can the limited notion of individuality exist alongside the unbounded, infinite Self? This is the delusional power of Mahamaya. Just as all the divine manifestations are projections of the Goddess, all the asuras are also projections of Asmita. Now that Shumbha is all alone, denuded of all the multiple projections of individual ego-awareness, the climax of the battle is between the limited self and the Supreme Self. But it is not a battle between equals though it looks like one on the face of it.

After exhausting all weapons, Shumbha and the Devi fight hand to hand in mid-air as never before, to the astonishment of the saints and sages! The combat with Shumbha is the rarest one, as Asmita is extremely elusive and stubborn. But the Devi’s Sattvic power can overcome the mightiest asuric force though after a short-lived play of power. Their battle is symbolic of a spiritual struggle that is beyond the realm of day to day existence. This is the significance of the metaphor of fighting in mid-air. Eventually the Devi kills him by piercing

the asura with Her spear of knowledge (gnana). The death of Asmita, the false self, or limited ego-awareness, is nothing but the relinquishing of a limited identity. But in losing this limited identity one gains an unimaginably greater one—that of the Supreme Being. This final victory represents the realization of the true Self, the end of all multiplicity, the steady experience of Oneness, and the passage from an ever-changing becoming to Pure Awareness or Being. Finally one can now join the seer of the Svetasvatara Upanishad in affirming, “I know the unchanging, primeval One, the indwelling Self of all things, existing everywhere, all pervading, whom the wise declare to be eternal, free from birth” (3. 21).

Middle episode (Madhyama Caritra) - Chapters 2, 3 and 4

The second episode of the glory of the Goddess is constituted by the second, third and fourth chapters-‘The Slaughter of Mahishasura’s Armies’, ‘The Slaying of Mahishasura’ and ‘The Devi Stuti’, respectively. The second episode narrates how the mother Goddess helped the gods by killing Mahishasura who took many different forms, including that of a buffalo.

Chapter 2

Of yore when Mahishasura was the lord of asuras and Indra the lord of devas, there was a war between the devas and asuras for a full hundred years. In that the army of the gods was vanquished by the mighty demons. After conquering all the devas, Mahishasura became the lord of heaven. Driven away from their homes the vanquished devas headed by Brahma, the father of beings, went to the place where Siva and Vishnu were. The devas then narrated the story of their defeat

wrought by Mahishasura in detail. “He (Mahishasura) himself has assumed the jurisdictions of Surya, Indra, Agni, Vayu, Chandra, Yama and Varuna and of other gods too. Thrown out from heaven by that evil-natured Mahisha, the hosts of devas wander on the earth like mortals. All that has been done by the enemy of the devas, has been related to you both, we seek shelter under you both. May both of you be pleased to think out the means of his destruction”. Thus spoke the devas.

Vishnu and Siva were greatly angered on hearing the tyranny of Mahishasura. As their faces became fierce with frowns there issued forth a great light from the face of Vishnu who was full of intense anger, and from that of Brahma and Siva too. A very great light sprang forth from the bodies of Indra and other devas as well. All this light united together. The devas saw there a concentration of light like a mountain blazing excessively, pervading all the quarters with its flames. Then that unique light, produced from the bodies of all the devas, pervading the three worlds with its lustre, combined into one and became a female form; the manifestation of the lights of other devas too combined into the auspicious being of the Goddess. Then looking at her, who had come into being from the assembled lights of all the devas, the immortals who were oppressed by Mahishasura experienced great joy.

Drawing forth a trident from his own trident Shiva presented it to her; Vishnu brought forth a discus out of his own discus and gave it to her. Varuna gave her a conch, Agni a spear; and Maruta gave a bow as well as two quivers full of arrows. Indra, lord of devas, bringing forth a thunderbolt out of his own

thunderbolt and a bell from that of his elephant Airavata, gave them to her. Yama gave a staff from his own staff of death and Varuna, the lord of waters, gave her a noose. Brahma, the lord of beings, gave a string of beads and a water-pot. Surya placed his own rays on all the pores of her skin, while Kala gave her a sword and a spotless shield. The milky ocean gave her the best ornaments and garments, Vishwakarma gave her a brilliant axe, various missiles and an unbreakable armour. The ocean gave her unfading lotus garlands to wear and a very beautiful lotus to be held in her hand. Himavan gave her various gems and the lion as her vehicle. Kubera the lord of wealth gave her a drinking cup always full of celestial wine.

Honoured with ornaments and weapons by the remaining gods too, the Goddess roared with loud laughter again and again. The entire sky was filled with her immeasurable stupendous roar and great was the echo that reverberated. All the worlds were frenzied and the oceans raged. The earth quaked and the mountains rocked in the wake of the Warrior Goddess, the great unity of the innate powers (saktis) of all the gods. "Victory to you," exclaimed the gods in joy to her, the lion-rider. The sages extolled her bowing their bodies in salutation. Seeing the three worlds agitated the foes of the gods, marshalled all their armies and rose up together with uplifted weapons. Exclaiming in wrath, Mahishasura rushed towards that sound, accompanied by innumerable asuras. Then he saw the Goddess pervading the three worlds with her effulgence. Making the earth bend with her footstep, scraping the sky with her diadem, shaking the nether worlds with the

twang of the bow-string, she stood there covering all the quarters with her thousand arms.

Then began the battle between that Devi and the enemies of the devas, in which the quarters of the sky were illumined by various arrows and missiles hurled at each other. She, the Goddess Durga, the embodiment of the lethal energy of divine anger turned against evil, set herself to destroy the armies of Mahishasura. Mahisasura's general, a great asura named Chiksura and Chamara fought, equipped with the fourfold complement of armies of asuras. A great asura named Udagra with sixty thousand chariots, and Mahahanu with ten million chariots waged the battle. Asiloman, another great asura, with fifteen million chariots and Baskala with six millions fought in that battle. Privarita with many thousands of elephants and horses, and encircled by ten million chariots, fought in that battle. An asura named Bidala fought in that battle surrounded by five billion chariots. And other great asuras, thousands in number, surrounded with chariots, elephants and horses fought with the Devi in that battle.

Mahisasura was encircled by many billions chariots, horses and elephants in that battle. Other asuras too fought in the battle against the Devi with iron maces and javelins, with spears and clubs, with swords, battle-axes and halberds. Some hurled spears and others nooses. They began to strike her with swords in order to kill her. Showering her own weapons and arms, Goddess Chandika too, quite playfully, cut into pieces all those weapons and arms. With gods and sages extolling her, showing no signs of fatigue on her face, the

Goddess Isvari hurled her weapons and arms at the bodies of the asuras. The mount of the Goddess, the lion, shaking its mane in rage, stalked amidst the armies of the asuras like a blazing forest fire. The sighs which the Goddess Ambika, fighting in the battle, heaved became at once her battalions by hundreds and thousands.

Energized by the power of the Devi, these battalions fought with battle-axes, javelins, swords and halberds, destroying the asuras. Of these battalions, some beat drums, some blew conches and others played on tabors in that great martial festival. The Goddess killed hundreds of asuras with her trident, mace, showers of spears, swords and the like, and threw down others who were stupefied by the noise of her bell. Binding others with her noose, she dragged them on the ground. Some were split into two by the sharp fall of her sword, and others, smashed by the blows of her mace, lay down on the ground while some who were severely hammered by the pestle vomited blood. Pierced in the breast by her trident, some fell on the ground.

In the battlefield, the asuras who afflicted the gods were caught in a flood of arrows and were pierced all over by arrows. Resembling porcupines, they breathed their last. Some had their arms cut off, some others their necks. Heads of others rolled down while some others were torn asunder in the middle of their trunks. Some great asuras fell on the ground with their legs severed. Some rendered one-armed, one-eyed, and one-legged were again rent into two by the Goddess. And others, though rendered headless, fell and rose

again. Some of these headless trunks danced there in the battlefield to the rhythm of the battle drums. The trunks of some other great asuras whose heads had been severed just then, shouted at the Devi “Stop, stop”, with their swords, spears and lances still in their hands.

That part of the earth where the battle was fought became impassable with the asuras, elephants and horses and chariots that had been felled. Streams of blood from the asuras, elephants and horses flowed immediately like large rivers amidst that army of the asuras. As fire consumes a huge heap of straw and wood, so did Ambika destroy that vast army of asuras in no time. And her carrier-lion, thundering aloud with quivering mane, prowled about in the battlefield, appearing to search out the vital breaths from the bodies of the enemies of the gods. In that battlefield the battalions of the Goddess fought in such a manner with the asuras that the gods were pleased and showered flowers from heaven.

Thus ends the second chapter – ‘Slaughter of the armies of Mahisasura’-of Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya Purana.

Chapter 3

Seeing that army being slain, Ciksura, the great asura general, proceeded in anger to fight with Ambika. The asura rained showers of arrows on the Goddess in battle just as a cloud showers rain on the peak of Mount Meru. Then the Goddess playfully cutting asunder the volley of arrows, killed his horses and their driver with her arrows. Forthwith she broke his bow and banner flying aloft, and with swift arrows she pierced the

body of that asura whose bow had been broken. His bow shattered, his chariot smashed, his horses killed and his charioteer slain, the asura armed with sword and shield jumped at the Goddess. Swiftly he struck the lion on the head with his sharp-edged sword and hit the Devi also on her left arm. His sword broke into pieces as soon as it touched her arm. Eyes reddened with anger he took the spear and hurled the resplendent weapon at Bhandrakali, as though he was hurling the very orb of sun from the skies. Seeing the spear coming upon her, the Devi hurled her spear. It shattered his spear into a hundred pieces, as it did likewise with the great asura.

When the very valiant general of Mahisha, was slain, Camara, the afflictor of the gods came forward mounted on an elephant. He too hurled his lance at the Devi. Ambika quickly assailed it with a grunt, made it lustreless and fall to the ground. Seeing his lance broken and fallen, Camara, full of rage, hurled a spear, and she broke that also with her arrows. Then the lion, leaping up and seating itself at the centre of the elephant's forehead, engaged itself in a hand to hand fight with that enemy of the gods. Fighting, the two then came down to the earth from the back of the elephant, and fought very animatedly dealing each other terrible blows. Then the lion, springing up quickly to the sky, and descending, severed Camara's head with a blow of its paw.

Udagra was killed in the battle by the Devi with rocks, trees and the like. Karala was brought down by her teeth, fists and slaps. Enraged, the Devi pulverised Uddhata with the blows of

her mace. She killed Baskala with a javelin and destroyed Tamra and Andhaka with arrows. The three-eyed Supreme Isvari killed Ugrasya, Ugravirya and Mahahanu too with her trident. With her sword she struck down Bidala's head from his body, and dispatched both Durdhara and Durmudha to the abode of Death with her arrows.

Seeing his army being destroyed thus, Mahisasura terrified the troops of the Devi with his buffalo form, hitting some by muzzle, trampling some by the hooves, lashing at some with his tail, and tearing others with his horns. Some he laid low on the face of the earth by sheer speed, some by his bellowing and wheeling movement, and others by the blast of his breath. Having laid low her army, Mahisasura rushed to slay the lion of the great goddess. This enraged Ambika. He too, of great valour, pounded the terrain with his hooves in rage, tossed about the mountains with his horns, and bellowed terribly. Crushed by his whirling speed, the earth crumbled to pieces. Lashed by his tail, the ocean flooded everywhere. Pierced by his swaying horns, the clouds went into pieces. His heaving breath lifted the mountains up in the sky in hundreds and brought them down.

Seeing the great asura bloated with rage advancing towards her, Chandika assumed an angry mood in order to slay him. She flung her noose over the great asura and bound him. Thus bound in the great battle, he relinquished his buffalo form. Then suddenly he became a lion. As soon as Ambika cut the head off, he took the appearance of a man with sword in hand. Immediately the Goddess cut asunder the man along with his

sword and shield. Then he became a huge elephant and pulled her lion with his trunk roaring loudly. As he was dragging, the Devi cut off his trunk with her sword. The great asura then resumed his buffalo form and shook the three worlds with their movable and immovable objects.

An enraged Chandika, the Mother of the worlds, quaffed again and again a superb drink, her eyes becoming red. The asura too intoxicated with his strength and valour roared and threw mountains at Chandika with his horns. She reduced those mountains to powder with a volley of arrows. She spoke to him, her words faltering and the colour of her face rising due to the intoxication of the drink. The Goddess said, “Roar, roar, O fool, for a moment till I drink this wine. Soon the gods are going to roar in this very place, when you get slain by me”. Exclaiming thus, she jumped and landed herself on that great asura, crushing his neck under her foot and struck him with her spear. Thereupon, caught under her foot, Mahishasura managed to emerge partly from his own buffalo mouth. Being completely overcome by the valour of the Goddess only half of his self could emerge. Fighting thus with his half-revealed form, the great asura was beheaded and slain by the Goddess with the sword. Then, crying in consternation, the entire army of asuras perished. The entire hosts of gods exulted at this. The gods along with the divine seers lauded the Goddess, the gandharva chiefs sang and the bebies of apsaras danced in celebration of Mahishasura’s end.

Thus ends the third chapter -‘The Slaying of Mahishasura’-of Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya Purana.

Chapter 4

When the most valiant and wicked Asura and his armies were slain by the Goddess, the hosts of gods headed by Indra lauded her, their necks and shoulders reverently bent, and bodies rendered beautiful with horripilation and exultation.

This is the longest and most eloquent of the Devi Mahatmyam’s four hymns. Known as the Shakradistuti (praise by Indra and the host of gods), it illumines the themes of good and evil, fate and free will, karma and divine grace. This hymn constitutes the fourth chapter of the Devi Mahatmyam. The hymn praises Durga as “good fortune in the dwellings of the virtuous and misfortune in the abodes of the wicked.” While this verse explicitly entails reward and punishment by a personal deity, implicitly it points to an impersonal balancing principle at work in the universe-the law of karma. Either ways the message is the same: our deeds have consequences. The hymn further proclaims that the Mother’s intentions are most gracious even toward evildoers. Her nature is to subdue the misconduct of the wicked. Through her inconceivable grace, even wrongdoers who have committed great evils that may well ensure them of long torments for their evil deeds are purified in battle by the touch of her weapons and are brought to beatitude. In destroying the demons the Goddess destroys the evil samskaras within us.

Thus the supporter of the worlds was praised and worshipped with celestial flowers, perfumes, unguents and heavenly incense by the devas. Benignly serene in countenance she spoke to the obeisant gods. The Devi said, “O devas, choose whatever you desire of me”. The gods responded, “Since our enemy, this Mahishasura, has been slain by you, O Bhagavati everything has been accomplished, and nothing remains to be done. And if a boon is to be granted to us by you, O Maheshvari, whenever we think of you again, please destroy our direct calamities. And, O Mother of spotless countenance, whatever mortal shall praise you with these hymns, may you, who have become gracious towards us, also be gracious to him and bless him to be fortunate, O Ambika!” Goddess Bhadrakali who was thus propitiated by the gods for their own sake and that of the world, said “Be it so” and vanished from their sight.

Thus ends the fourth chapter -‘The Devi Stuti’-of the Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya-Purana.

Final episode (Uttama Caritra) - Chapters 5 to 13

In the final episode referred to as the *uttama caritra*, sage Medhas narrates the story of the demons Shumbha and Nishumbha. This time the cast of characters is much larger and the metaphorical significance is subtle but not difficult to comprehend. This story too has a familiar beginning.

Chapter 5

Two demons, named Shumbha and Nishumbha, have dispossessed the gods, stripped them of their powers and appropriated their wealth and privilege. Indra's sovereignty over the three worlds and his portions of the sacrifices are taken away by the Shumbha and Nishumbha, by force of their pride and strength. The two powerful demons take over likewise, the offices of the Surya, Chandra, Kubera, Yama, and Varuna. The same happens to Vayu's and Agni's portfolios as well.

Deprived of their lordships and sovereignties, expelled by the two mighty asuras, the gods thought of the invincible Devi. “She had granted us the boon: ‘Whenever in calamities you think of me, that very moment I will put an end to all your worst calamities’”. Resolving thus, the devas went to Himavat, lord of the mountains, and there extolled the Devi, who is the illusive power of Vishnu.

This is the third hymn in the text. Also known as *Aparajita-stuti* or *Tantrika Devi Suktam*, in this hymn there are more than twenty slokas beginning with ‘*ya devi sarva bhuteshu*’, indicating that the devi is present in all creatures as consciousness, as power, as intellect, as memory, as sleep, as delusion, as desire, as activity, as prosperity, as forgiveness, as faith, as loveliness, and so on, reminding us of the *Vibhuti Yoga of Gita*. This beautiful hymn is a powerful meditation by itself, a combination of meditation, affirmation and mantra.

The devas said: ‘Salutations to the Devi, to the Mahadevi. Salutations always to her who is ever auspicious. Salutation to her who is the Primordial Prakrti and the ever Benign. To Thee we offer our humble obeisance...’

While the gods were thus engaged in extolling the Unvanquished (*Aparajita*) Goddess, Parvati came there to bathe in the waters of the Ganga. She, the lovely-browed, enquired of the gods, “Who is she that is being extolled here?” An auspicious goddess, sprung forth from her body sheath (*kosha*) and spoke, “This hymn is addressed to me by the assembled devas routed in battle and set at naught by the

asuras Shumbha and Nishumbha.” Because that Goddess emerged from Parvati's body sheath (kosa:sheath), she is glorified as Kaushiki in all the worlds. After she had issued forth, Parvati became dark and was called Kalika (dark) and took her abode on mount Himalaya.

Then, Chanda, and Munda, the servants of Shumbha and Nishumbha, saw Ambika (Kausiki) who had assumed a surpassingly charming form. They both told Shumbha: 'O great king, a certain woman, most surpassingly beautiful, resides there shedding lustre on mount Himalaya. Nobody has ever seen such supreme beauty anywhere. Ascertain who that Goddess is and take possession of her, O Lord of the asuras! A gem among women, of exceedingly lovely limbs, stands, making the quarters luminous by her lustre. You ought to see her. O Lord, whatever things are there in the three worlds, all of them, gems, jewels, elephants, horses etc., are now in your mansion. You have seized every precious possession from the likes of Indra, Brahma, Kubera, Varuna, and Yama. Nishumbha has all kinds of gems born in the ocean. Agni too given you a pair of garments purified by fire. Thus, O Lord of asuras, all gems have been seized by you. Why this auspicious lady, a jewel among women has not been taken by you?’

On hearing these words of Chanda and Munda, Shumbha sent the great asura Sugriva as messenger to the Goddess. He said, “Go and tell her thus in my words and do the thing in such a manner that she may quickly come to me in love”.

Sugriva went to the very beautiful spot on the mountain where the Devi was and spoke to her in fine and sweet words. The messenger said, “O Devi, Shumbha, lord of asuras, is the supreme sovereign of the three worlds. Sent by him as messenger, I have come here to your presence. Hearken to what has been said by him, who has vanquished all the foes of the asuras and whose command has never been transgressed even by the devas. He says ‘All the three worlds are mine and the devas are obedient to me. We look upon you, O Devi, as the jewel of womankind in the world. You who are such, come to me, since we are the enjoyers of the best objects. Take to me or to my younger brother Nishumbha of great prowess, O lady of wavering glance, for you are in truth a jewel. Wealth, great and beyond compare, you will get by accepting me. Think over this in your mind, and become my wife’.”

Durga the adorable and auspicious, by whom this universe is supported, said serenely, “You have spoken truth; nothing false has been uttered by you in this matter. Shumbha is indeed the sovereign of the three worlds and likewise is also Nishumbha. But how can that which has been promised go false? Hear what promise I had made already in my immaturity. ‘He who conquers me in battle, vanquishes my pride and is my match in strength in the world shall be my husband’. So let Shumbha come here or Nishumbha of great strength. Vanquishing me here let him easily win my hand in marriage. Why delay?”

The messenger said, “O Devi, you are haughty. Talk not so before me. Which man in the three worlds dare stand before

Shumbha and Nishumbha? All the devas verily cannot stand face to face with even the other asuras in battle. Why mention you, O Devi, a single woman? When the gods headed by Indra could not stand in battle against Shumbha and other demons, how will you, a woman, face them? On my word alone, you go to Shumbha and Nishumbha. Let it not be that you go to them with your dignity lost by being dragged by your hair”.

The Goddess said, “It is true. Shumbha is strong and so is Nishumbha . What can I do since there stands my ill-considered vow taken long ago? Go back, and tell the lord of asuras carefully all that I have said. Let him then do whatever he considers proper”.

Thus ends the fifth chapter – ‘Devi's conversation with the messenger’-of the Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya-Purana.

Chapter 6

Hearing the words of the Devi, the indignant messenger hastened back and related them in detail to the king of the daityas. Hearing the report from his messenger, the enraged asura monarch told Dhumralochana, a chieftain of the daityas, “O Dhumralochana, hasten together with your army and fetch that shrew here by force, unnerving her by dragging her by her hair. If anyone else stands up as her saviour, let him be slain, be he a god, a yaksa or a gandharva.”

As commanded by Shumbha, the asura Dhumralochana, marched past quickly, accompanied by sixty thousand asuras. On seeing the Goddess stationed on the snowy mountain, he

shouted, “Set out to the presence of Shumbha and Nishumbha. If you do not go to my master now with love, I shall take you by force, unnerving you by dragging you by the hair.” The Goddess replied, “You have been sent by the lord of the daityas. You are strong and backed by an army. If you take me by force what can I do?”

On hearing her words, Dhumralochana rushed towards her. The Goddess reduced the demon to ashes by a mere heave of her breath (humkara). Seeing Dhumralochana turned to ashes, the enraged army of demons showered on Ambika sharp arrows, lances and battle-axes. Then the lion, the mount of the Goddess, shook its mane in anger and roaring most terrifyingly, pounced on the army of asuras. It slaughtered some demons striking with its paw, tearing out the bellies of some with its claws, others with its mouth, and some by a stampede with its hind legs. In a moment, the entire army was destroyed by the enraged and noble lion that bore the Goddess as her vehicle.

Hearing that the demon Dhumralochana was slain by the Goddess and that the entire army was destroyed by the lion of the Goddess, Shumbha, the lord of the asuras became furious. His lips quivering, he commanded the two mighty asuras Chanda and Munda, “O Chanda, O Munda, go there with large forces, and quickly bring her here, dragging her by her hair or binding her. If you are unsure of that, then let the asuras strike her in battle with all the weapons. When that shrew is wounded and her lion stricken down, seize that Ambika, bind her and bring her quickly”.

Thus ends the sixth chapter – ‘The Slaying of Dhumralochana’ -of Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya Purana.

Chapter 7

Then at his command the asuras headed by Chanda and Munda, marched in fourfold array, fully armed. They saw the Devi, smiling gently, seated upon the lion on a lofty golden peak of the great mountain. On seeing her, some of them got excited and made an effort to capture her, and others approached her, with their swords drawn and bows bent. Thereupon Ambika became terribly angry with those foes, and in her anger her countenance then became dark as ink. Suddenly, Kali of the terrible countenance, armed with a sword and noose, emerged forth from the surface of Ambika’s forehead that was fierce with a frown. Holding a strange skull-topped staff, decorated with a garland of skulls, clad in a tiger's skin, very appalling due to her emaciated body, with a gaping mouth and tongue lolling out fearfully, with deep-sunk reddish eyes, she filled the quarters with her roars.

Kali devoured the army of the foes of the gods, falling upon them impetuously and slaughtering the great asuras in that army. Devouring some, crushing others, chewing most frightfully with her teeth, she pounded the entire army of the mighty wicked asuras. Seeing the entire army of asuras laid to the ground in a moment, Chanda ran towards the terrible Kali. While Chanda showered arrows at her, Munda hurled discuses in thousands at her eyes. The numerous discuses entering her mouth shone like so many orbs of the Sun as Kali just

swallowed them. Laughing fiercely, Kali of the terrible countenance mounted the great lion and rushed at Chanda. Seizing him by his hair, she severed his head with her sword. Seeing Chanda being slain, Munda also rushed at her. Striking him furiously with her sword, she felled him too to the ground.

Seeing the most valiant Chanda and Munda vanquished, the remaining army became panicky and fled in all directions. And Kali, holding the heads of Chanda and Munda in her hands, approached Chandika and said, “In this sacrifice of battle, here have I brought you the heads of Chanda and Munda the great beasts. Shumbha and Nishumbha, you shall yourself slay.” Thereupon, seeing the two great asuras Chanda and Munda brought to her, the auspicious Chandika, said to Kali these playful words, “As you have brought me both Chanda and Munda, you O Devi, shall be famed in the world by the name Chamunda.

Thus ends the seventh chapter – ‘The slaying of Chanda and Munda’ -of Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya Purana.

Chapter 8

When Chanda and Munda were laid low and many of the battalions of the asuras destroyed, the lord of the asuras, the mighty Sumbha, with intellect clouded by rage, commanded the marshalling of all the asura armies. “Now, let the eighty-six Udayudhas with all their forces and uplifted weapons, and the eighty-four Kambus, along with their own forces, set out for battle. Let the fifty asura families of Kotiviryas and the

hundred families of Dhaumras go forth at my command. Likewise let the asura clans, Kalakas, Daurhrdas, the Mauryas and the Kalakeyas hasten at my command and march forth ready for battle”. Issuing these orders, Sumbha, the lord of the asuras, the cruel despot, set out surrounded thousands of huge forces.

Seeing that most terrible army advancing, Chandika filled the space between the earth and the sky with twangs of her bow-string. Thereon her lion roared very loudly. Ambika amplified those sounds with the clanging of the bell. Filling the quarters with roars from her gaping mouth, Kali suffused the sounds of the bow-string, lion and bell by her terrific roars. On hearing that roar the infuriated armies of the asuras surrounded the lion, the Goddess (Chandika) and Kali on all the four sides. Meanwhile, in order to ensure the annihilation of the enemies of the gods and also for the well-being of the great gods, there issued forth, endowed with exceeding valour and strength, Shaktis from the bodies of Brahma, Shiva, Guha, Vishnu and Indra, Whatever was the form of the Godhead, whatever his ornaments and vehicle, in that very form his Shakti advanced to fight the asuras.

In a heavenly chariot yoked by swans came Brahma's Shakti carrying a rosary and water-pot (kamandalu). She is called Brahmani. Maheshvari arrived, mounted on a bull, holding the great trident, with huge serpents for bangles, with the digit of the moon as an ornament. The mother Kaumari came in the form of Guha, riding on a fine peacock wielding the spear in her hand, to attack the asuras. Likewise seated upon

Garuda, holding conch, club, bow and sword in hand, came Vaishnavi, the Shakti of Vishnu. Varahi, who assumed the incomparable form of Hari as the sacrificial boar, also came. Narasmihi too arrived, assuming a form like that of Narasmiha, half-woman and half-lioness, bringing down the constellations by the toss of her mane. Likewise the thousand-eyed Aindri, holding a thunderbolt in hand and riding on the lord of elephants arrived just like Indra. Thereupon Shiva, surrounded by those shaktis of the devas, said to Chandika, “Let the asuras be killed forthwith by you for my gratification”. Then, from the body of the Goddess issued forth the most terrific Shakti of Chandika, exceedingly fierce and yelling like a hundred jackals together. She, the invincible, told Shiva, of smoke-hued matted locks, “Go, O lord, as an ambassador to the presence of Sumbha and Nisumbha. Tell the two arrogant asuras and the other asuras assembled there for battle-‘Let Indra obtain the sovereignty of the three worlds and let the gods partake the oblations. You go to the nether world, if you wish to live. But if through pride of strength you are anxious for battle, then come by all means. Let my jackals be satisfied with your flesh’.” Since that Devi appointed Shiva himself as her ambassador, thenceforth she became renowned in this world as ‘Shiva-duti’.

Hearing the words of the Devi communicated by Shiva, those great asuras, on their part, were filled with indignation and repaired to the place where Katyayani stood. Then in the very beginning, the enraged foes of the gods showered arrows, lances and double-edged swords on the Goddess.

The Goddess cut asunder playfully those arrows, spears, lances and battle-axes hurled by them, with powerful arrows shot from her full-drawn bow. Then, Kali stalked about, in front of Sumbha, tearing the foes to pieces with her spear and mashing them with her skull-topped staff. Whomsoever Brahmani attacked, she made those enemies bereft of valour and prowess by sprinkling on them the water from her water-pot. Maheshvari slew the daityas with her trident, Vaisnavi, with her discus and Kaumari, with her lance. Torn to pieces by Aindr's thunderbolt which came down upon them, the demons the offspring of diti and danu, fell on the earth in hundreds, streams of blood flowing. Pounded by blows from the snout of the boar-formed goddess Varahi, wounded in their chests by the point of her tusk and rent by her discus, the asuras fell down. Filling the sky and the quarters with her roars, Narasmihi, roamed about in the battle, devouring other great asuras torn by her claws. Dispirited by the violent laughter of Shivaduti, the asuras fell on the earth as she promptly devoured those who had fallen down.

Seeing the enraged band of Mothers (Matru ganas) crushing the great asuras by various means, the troops of the enemies of gods took to their heels. Noticing the fleeing demons assailed by the Matru ganas, the great asura Raktabija strode forward to fight in wrath. No sooner a drop of blood from Raktabija's body fell on the ground than a great asura of his very stature would spring forth on the earth. With mace in hand the great asura fought with Indra's shakti . Then Aindri struck Ranktabija with her thunderbolt. As blood flowed

profusely from Raktabija, who was wounded by the thunderbolt, there arose from his blood, combatants of his stature and might.

As many drops of blood fell from his body, so many persons with his valour, strength and prowess came into being. And they who took birth from his blood, too fought with the Mother-goddesses more terribly, hurling formidable weapons. Again when Raktabija's head was wounded by the thunderbolt, his blood flowed, and from that blood were born thousands more. In the battle Vaisnavi struck him with her discus. Aindri hit the great asura with her mace. The world was pervaded by thousands of great asuras of his stature, born from the blood that flowed out of the cut inflicted by Vaisnavi's discus. Kaumari struck him with her spear and Varahi with her sword. Maheshvari assaulted him with her trident. And the enraged Raktabija struck the Mother-goddesses individually as well as severally with his club.

Hundreds of asuras came into being from the stream of blood that fell on the ground as he received multiple wounds by the lances, spears and other weapons. The entire world was pervaded by the asuras who took birth from the blood of Raktabija. The gods were intensely alarmed at this. Seeing the devas dejected, Chandika laughed and said to Kali, "O Chamunda, keep your mouth wide open. And with this mouth quickly take in the drops of blood generated by the blow of my weapon and also the great asuras born of the drops of blood of Raktabija. Roam about in the battlefield, devouring the great asuras born from his blood. Thus this demon shall perish,

losing all his blood. As you go on devouring them, other fierce asuras will not be born”.

Having enjoined her thus, the Goddess then struck Raktabija with her spear. Thereupon Kali drank Raktabija's blood with her mouth. Rightaway Raktabija struck Chandika with his mace. The the blow did not cause her even the slightest pain. On the other hand, blood flowed profusely from the stricken parts of his body and from wherever it flowed Chamunda (Kali) swallowed it with her mouth. And Chamunda devoured the asuras born from the blood in her mouth, as she carried on with drinking his blood. The Goddess smote Raktabija with her spear, thunderbolt, arrows, swords, and double-edged swords, while Kali went on drinking his blood. Hit by a multitude of weapons that made him lose all his blood, the great asura Raktabija eventually fell on the ground. Thereupon the gods attained great joy. The Mother-goddesses who emerged from them danced drunk with the asura's blood.

Chapter 9

After Raktabija was slain and other asuras were killed in the fight, the asura Shumbha and Nishumbha gave way to unbounded wrath. Enraged on seeing his great army slaughtered, Nishumbha rushed forth with the chief forces of the asuras. In front of him, at his back and on his sides great asuras, biting their lips in ire advanced to slay the Goddess. Having fought with the Mother-goddesses, the great warrior Shumbha too arrived in fury, accompanied by his forces, to slay Chandika.

Then commenced a severe combat between the Devi on one side and, Shumbha and Nishumbha on the other, from whom rained a most tempestuous shower of arrows on her like showers from two clouds. With a shower of arrows Chandika quickly split the arrows shot by the two asuras and hit the two lords of asuras on their limbs with a multitude of weapons. In the ensuing combat Nishumbha hit the lion of the Goddess on the head, upon which the Goddess destroyed his weapons one after another. Then the asura Nishumbha, bloated with anger, seized the spear and that also, as it came, the Goddess powdered with a blow of her fist. Then Goddess laid the advancing Nishumbha to the ground, striking him with a torrent of arrows.

When the mighty Nishumbha was thus laid flat on the ground the exceedingly angry Shumbha set out to slay Ambika. Standing in his chariot and pervading the entire sky with his long and incomparable eight arms holding excellent weapons, he shone. Seeing him advancing, the Goddess blew her conch, and made an extremely unbearable twang of her bow-string. She filled all the quarters with the sound of her bell that rang the death-knell to the splendour of the entire armies of asuras. Then the lion filled the heaven, the earth and the ten quarters of the sky with loud roars, which made the elephants abandon their violent rut.

Thereupon, Kali leapt up striking the sky and the earth with both her hands. All the previous sounds were drowned in that sound. Sivaduti burst into a thunderous and ominous laughter, terrifying the asuras and Sumbha flew into an

utmost rage. No sooner had the Mother said “Stand fast, O evil-natured one”, the gods stationed in the sky cheered, “Victory to thee”.

The spear, flaming most terribly and shining like a mass of fire, hurled by the advancing Shumbha, as it was coming along, was put out by a great firebrand from the Goddess. The interspace between the three worlds was pervaded by Shumbha's war cry, but the dreadful thunder-clap of the Goddess smothered that too. In hundreds and thousands the Goddess and Shumbha split the arrows shot by each other. Then the enraged Chandika struck him with a spear. Wounded therewith, Shumbha fainted and fell to the ground. Then regaining consciousness, Nisumbha seized his bow and struck with arrows the Goddess, Kali and the lion.

Putting forth ten thousand arms, the lord of the asuras covered Chandika with ten thousand discuses. Then the Goddess Durga, the destroyer of difficulties and afflictions, became angry and cut asunder those discuses and arrows with her own arrows. Thereupon Nisumbha, accompanied by the army of asuras, swiftly seizing his mace, rushed forward to kill Chandika. As he was rushing at her, Chandika broke his mace to pieces with her sharp-edged sword. Then he seized the spear and rushed forth. Quickly Chandika pierced him in the heart with a swiftly hurled spear. From Nishumbha's heart that was pierced issued forth another person of great strength and valour, exclaiming “Stop”. As he emerged the Goddess severed his head with her sword, laughing loudly. Thereupon he fell to the ground. The lion then devoured those asuras

whose necks he had crushed with his fierce teeth, while Kali and Sivaduti devoured others. The Mother-goddesses Kaumari, Brahmani, Maheshwari, Varahi, Vaishnavi and Aindri, put to naught many asuras, as Kali, Sivaduti and the lion devoured others, while some asuras fled from the battle.

Chapter 10

Seeing his brother Nishumbha, who was dear to him as his life, slain and his army being slaughtered, Shumbha spoke in fury, “O Durga, wicked and possessed by pride in your strength, do not be conceited. You fight dependant on the strength of others and yet think highly of yourself”. The Goddess said, “In this universe, I alone exist. Who else is there besides me? Look, O wicked one, these manifestations of mine merge into my own self!” Then all those goddesses headed by Brahmani merged in the body of the Goddess. Then Mother Ambika alone remained there. The Goddess said “The many manifestations, which I manifested here by my own power, have been withdrawn by me, and now I stand alone. Be steadfast in combat”.

Then began a dreadful battle between them both, the Devi and Shumbha, while all the devas and asuras looked on. With showers of arrows, with sharp weapons and frightful missiles, both engaged again in a combat that frightened all the worlds. The asura king broke the hundreds of divine missiles that the Goddess launched, with neutralising weapons. The great Goddess too playfully destroyed all the celestial missiles shot by him. In the fierce combat that ensued, the Goddess

destroyed Shumbha's weapons one by one, then his horses, chariot, bow and mace, fighting gallantly. In spite of the last of his weapons being destroyed by the Goddess, the distinguished asura leaped at her swiftly, bringing his fist down on her heart.

Then the Goddess hit him on the chest. Wounded by the blow of her palm, the king of asuras fell on the ground. Rising up again without delay, the king of asuras, leapt up towards the sky, seizing the Goddess. There too Chandika fought with him without any support. Then much to the wonder of the siddhas and the sages Shumbha and Chandika fought as never before, wrestling with each other in the sky.

After wrestling with him for a while, the Mother Goddess Ambika lifted him up, whirled him around and flung him down to the earth. Thus thrown to the ground, the wicked asura rose swiftly on reaching the ground, and rushed forward raising his fist, intending to kill Chandika. Seeing the lord of all the asura-folks approaching, the Goddess chucked him down to the earth piercing him on the chest with a spear. Pierced by the pointed spear of the Goddess, he fell lifeless on the ground, shaking the entire earth with its oceans, islands and mountains.

When that wicked one was slain, everything became clear and propitious, the universe regained its original state of perfect peace, and the sky became clear. Flaming portent-clouds that were in evidence earlier, vanished and the rivers kept within their courses after Shumbha's collapse. As he had been slain,

the minds of all the hosts of gods were filled with joy and the celestial musicians (gandharvas) sang sweetly. Others played their musical instruments and the bevy of celestial nymphs (apsaras) danced. Likewise the winds blew favourably and the sun became resplendent.

Chapter 11

When the great lord of asuras was slain there by the Goddess, Indra and other gods headed by Agni, lauded Goddess Katyayani, illuminating the quarters with their moon-like faces, cheerfully as their wishes had been fulfilled.

The Goddess said "O host of gods, I shall grant a boon. Choose whatever boon you desire in your mind. I shall grant it for the welfare of the world".

The gods said "O Sovereign of all, in this very manner, you should accomplish the destruction of our foes and also the pacification of all the afflictions of three worlds".

The Devi said "In the time of Vaivasvata Manu, when the twenty-eighth yuga has arrived two other great asuras, Sumbha and Nisumbha will be born. Then born from the womb of Yasoda, in the home of cowherd Nanda, taking abode in the Vindhya mountains, I shall destroy them both. Again, I shall incarnate on earth in a very terrible form and shall slay the descendants of asura Vipracitti. When I devour those fierce asuras, the descendants of Vipracitti, my teeth shall become red like the flower of pomegranate. Therefore,

when lauding me, the gods and the mortals shall always speak of me as Raktadantika, the red-toothed.

And again when there is no water for a period of hundred years on account of failure of rains, propitiated by the sages, I will be self-manifest on the drought-ridden earth, but not womb begotten. Then I shall behold the sages with a hundred eyes and so mankind will glorify me as the 'hundred-eyed'. O gods, then till the rains set in, I shall maintain the whole world with life -sustaining vegetables born out of my own body. I shall then be famed on the earth as Sakambhari. At that very period I shall slay the great asura named Durgama. Thereby I shall have the celebrated name of Durgadevi.

Again, assuming a terrible form on the mountain Himalaya, I shall destroy the demons for the protection of the sages. Then all the sages, shall praise me with their bodies bent in reverence. Then I shall have the celebrated name of Bhimadevi. When the asura named Aruna works great havoc in the three worlds, I shall take the form of a cluster of innumerable bees and shall slay the great asura for the good of the world. Then people shall laud me everywhere as Bhramari. Thus whenever trouble arises due to the advent of the danavas, I shall incarnate for the for the accomplishment of the destruction of the foes”.

Chapter 12

The Devi said, “With a concentrated mind, whoever shall pray to me constantly with these hymns, I shall without doubt put an end to all his troubles. Whoever extols my deeds relating to

the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha, the killing of Mahishasura and likewise the slaughter of Shumbha and Nishumbha, whoever listens devotedly with a focused mind, to my glories sung in this Mahatmyam, on the eighth, the fourteenth and on the ninth days of the fortnight, to them nothing bad shall happen, nor calamities that arise from wrong doings nor poverty nor separation from beloved ones. Neither fear from enemies, robbers, kings, nor from weapons, fire and floods. Hence this, my Mahatmyam, must be chanted by those of concentrated minds and listened to constantly with devotion, for it is the supreme way to well-being”.

“This Mahatmyam will quell all sufferings due to epidemics, as also the three types of calamities¹. I will never forsake and the place of my sanctuary where this poem is duly chanted every day, there I shall certainly be. When offerings are made, during worship, in fire-rituals and on great festivals, this Mahatmyam should be entirely chanted and heard. I shall fondly accept the sacrifice, the worship and the fire-ritual thus done, whether they are done with appropriate knowledge or not”.

“During the time of the Great worship in autumn² as well as the beginning of the New Year³, those who hear this Mahatmyam of mine with devotion shall be surely delivered from all troubles and be blessed with riches, grains and children. Listening to this Mahatmyam, to the

¹ Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika and Adhi-daivika are the three types of Calamities

² Sarad Navaratri Maha Pooja done for nine nights beginning from autumnal equinox' popular as the Devi Navaratri during Dushera

³ The Hindu New Year is at the time of spring equinox when the vasanta navaratri are celebrated starting from New Year day (Ugadi) on Chaitra Shukla Pratipada and culminating on Sri Rama Navami auspicious manifestations of mine, and my feats of prowess in battles, one becomes fearless. Enemies perish, welfare accrues and families rejoice for those who listen to this Mahatmyam of mine. My Mahatmyam should be listened to everywhere, at a propitiatory ceremony, on seeing a bad dream, and for planetary afflictions. Thereby troubles subside, as also the terrible afflictions of planets. The bad dream turns into a good one”.

“It will result in the pacification of children under the grasp of bala grahas. It is the best promoter of friendship amongst men when there is a break in relationships. It destroys most effectively the strength all evil-doers. Verily demons, ghosts and ogres are destroyed by its mere chanting. This Mahatmyam of mine chanted in its entirety makes a devotee very close to me. By means of finest flowers, arghya and incenses, and by perfumes and lamps, by feeding Brahmanas, by oblations, by sprinkling consecrated water, and by various other offerings and gifts, if one worships day and night for a full year, the satisfaction that I get, the same is attained by reciting or listening but once to this Mahatmyam of mine”.

“Hearing the story destroys sins, and grants freedom from illness. The recital of my manifestations affords protection from evil spirits. If my exploits of exterminating the wicked demons in battles are heard, people will have no fear from enemies. Let the hymns recited by you, and those by the divine sages, and those by Brahma bestow an auspicious in thought. Lost in a desolate area in a forest, or surrounded by a forest fire, or encircled by robbers, or captured by enemies in a desolate spot, or pursued by a lion, tiger, or wild elephants in a forest, or sentenced to death by the orders of a wrathful king, or imprisoned, or caught in a boat tossed by winds on the high seas, or facing a volley of arrows in the most terrible battle, or amidst all kinds of dreadful troubles, or afflicted with pain, -remembering this story of mine, saves one from the predicament. By my power, animals like lions, robbers and enemies, flee from a distance from one who remembers this story of mine”.

The Sage (Medhas) said “Having thus spoken, the great Chandika, of fierce prowess, vanished on that very spot even as the gods were gazing at her. Their enemies having been destroyed, the gods, relieved of uncertainty in their minds, began to enjoy their shares in yagnas and wield their authorities as before. With Shumbha and Nishumbha of great prowess slain by the Goddess, the remaining demons were off to the netherworlds. Thus O King, the Goddess, although eternal, manifesting again and again, carries out the protection of the world. By her this universe is deluded, and it is she who gives birth to this universe. When entreated, she

bestows supreme knowledge, and when propitiated, she confers prosperity. This entire cosmos is pervaded by the great Goddess in the form of Mahakali and Mahamari.

At one time She is Mahamari, the destroyer and at another time She, the unborn, becomes this creation. She herself, the eternal Being, sustains the beings at other times. In times of prosperity, She is verily Lakshmi, who bestows prosperity in the homes of men and in times of misfortune, she herself becomes the goddess of misfortune, and brings about ruin. When lauded and worshipped with flowers, perfumes and incense, she bestows wealth, offspring and an auspicious mind bent on Dharma.

Chapter 13

The Sage Medhas said “O King, this sublime glory of the Goddess has been narrated to you. Such is the glory of the Goddess by whom this world is upheld and sustained. Likewise She, Vishnu-Maya, the illusive power of Lord Vishnu, confers knowledge. By her, you, this merchant and others of discerning intellect are deluded. Others have been deluded in the past and many others will be deluded in the future. O great King, take refuge in her, the supreme Isvari. She indeed when worshipped bestows on men enjoyment, heaven and liberation from transmigration.

Markandeya said to his disciple Bhaguri, “Hearing the sage Medhas’ words, O great sage, King Suratha who had become despondent due to excessive attachment, the sense of ‘mine’, and the dispossession of his kingdom, prostrated before the

illustrious Rishi of sever penances and immediately repaired to perform austerities. The merchant too went with the king. They repaired to the sandy banks of a river in order to obtain a vision of the Mother. The king and the merchant practised penances, chanting the supreme Devi-sukta.

Having made an earthen image of the Goddess on the sands of the river, they both worshipped her in the image with flowers, incense, fire-rituals and ritual offerings of water. Abstaining from partaking food, with only one thought, their minds fixed on her, with concentration, they both offered sacrifices sprinkled with blood drawn from their own bodies. When they, propitiated her thus for three years, exercising self-control, Chandika, the upholder and sustainer of the world, became pleased, appeared before them and spoke to them. “O King, whatever you prayed for, and O delight of your family (referring to the merchant), whatever you too prayed for, receive all that from me. Well-pleased, I bestow those boons to you both”.

Then the King chose a kingdom that would be imperishable even in a future life, while in this life, he sought strength to destroy the strength of his enemies and thereby the restoration of his own kingdom. But the wise merchant, whose mind was full of dispassion for the world, chose the knowledge, which releases one from the attachment of ‘mine’ and ‘I’.

The Goddess said “O King, in a few days you shall obtain back your own kingdom after slaying your foes, and it will not be

lost thereafter. After your death, you will attain another birth through the Sun god, and shall be a Manu on earth by name Savarni. O the best amongst merchants, I grant you the boon, which you have desired of me. Supreme knowledge shall be yours, for your self-fulfilment.

Markandeya said “Having thus granted both of them the boon that they desired, the Goddess vanished forthwith, as they were extolling her with devotion. Thus, Suratha, the best of warriors, having attained the boon from the Goddess, shall obtain another birth through Surya and shall be the eighth Manu named Savarni”.

The inner metaphorical significance of the Devi Mahatmyam

Now let us examine the significance of the Devi Mahatmyam or Saptashati from the level of inner psychic reality. The Devi Mahatmyam begins with Markandeya narrating how a virtuous king named Suratha, dispossessed of his kingdom meets the merchant Samadhi who too has been dispossessed of his wealth and cast out by his own wife and children. Instead of finding tranquillity amid the peaceful and spiritual surroundings of the sage Medhas' hermitage, they are plagued by thoughts of loss, betrayal and attachment to the past. Together they approach the wise sage Medhas, whose task it is to awaken them to a higher spiritual awareness. The king, the merchant and the sage are archetypal characters that reside in all of us to differing degrees, characters with whom we can identify to varying degrees.

The King, the Merchant and the Sage as allegories to the Body, Mind and Intellect Suratha is "one who has a good chariot" (su: good; ratha: chariot). The body is the chariot

while the Self is the rider. "The Self is the rider, and the body the chariot; the intellect is the charioteer, and the mind the reins" (Katha Upanishad 1. 3. 3). Man does the journey of life through the cycle of samsara with the chariot (ratha) of the body. In this long cycle of innumerable births called samsara chakra, man goes through countless lives. The cycle of samsara and its inevitable sufferings goes on as long as man does not realize that it is the Self (Atman) that is the rider and not the body or mind or pseudo-self. Unfortunately we continue to suffer till we realize this. According to the world-view of the Devi Mahatmyam, it is the Goddess who is the Supreme Self. Hence as the Supreme Self She is the rider. Born a warrior (kshatriya) Suratha is endowed with a strong physique, a good body. By virtue of his strength, he is capable of protecting himself as well as others. Initially he has all the material enjoyments that come naturally to a king. Yet he loses them later on in life as one would expect in an impermanent and temporal world. This loss coupled with his continued attachment is the cause of his suffering. Till then all along he had not realized that the Goddess, the Supreme Self is the rider. So in spite of everything he was not truly a "Su"ratha or one with a good chariot.

Samadhi, on the other hand is a merchant (vaishya). The word 'samadhi' indicates an integrated or concentrated or focussed mind, a mind that is absorbed in meditation ('sam': together or integrated; 'a': towards; and 'dha': to hold). In other words the word 'samadhi' denotes a focused or concentrated mind, a mind in meditation. As his name indicates, Samadhi, the

merchant is single-minded or one-pointed in his pursuits. Being a merchant initially his focus is on wealth. Because he has the natural ability to be focused, he attains his goal-material wealth. In the first half of their lives the king and the merchant pursue their goals-power and riches-respectively and they attain their goals. Both the king and the merchant are good by nature. The king protects his subjects like his own children while the noble merchant shares his prosperity with his whole family. But power and riches are not permanent in this ever-changing world. As is often the case both of them lose their hard-earned and well deserved power and riches. Cheated by people whom they trusted, they realise the limitations of worldly life. Apart from fate, their own relatives cheat them. In fact the merchant's wife and sons misappropriate his wealth and cast him out. In spite of their good characters and abilities they end up as losers. Having experienced deceit, cunningness and heartbreak, both the king and the merchant are deeply disappointed but not disillusioned. They still cling to those very things and the people that have abandoned them. Even then their hearts cling to their old associations. They are unable to detach their minds.

The king and the merchant are archetypal characters. We are all a bit like the king and the merchant. We all share their predicament. At some point of time we all experience suffering, hurt and loss. At times our close friends, relatives, and family members fail us. In spite of our deep hurts we still cling on to our old ways and old associations. We fail to

discern. We fail to learn from our past. Instead we simply brood over the past constantly reliving our miseries in the present. The king and the merchant find themselves in the hermitage of a great sage in whose hermitage even wild beasts have successfully tamed themselves of their ferocity. Yet the king and the merchant find it hard to awaken their abilities to discern or be dispassionate. Here again we share their plight. Most of us go to a temple or an ashram or a spiritual retreat or a great saint only to find that the mind is still under the conditioning of the past. We worry about our losses and hurts. It would be good if we could reflect rather than brood over our losses and hurts. This is our predicament.

Returning back to the merchant Samadhi, though he had the natural inborn ability to engage his mind in meditation, in single minded pursuit, it did not bring him happiness. Instead the end result was unhappiness. Why? He concentrated on wealth alone. The object of his single-minded pursuit was only material wealth. You always get what you pursue with a focused mind, whatever you meditate on you attain that. The merchant focused on the riches of material existence. The external world is impermanent (anitya). Existential suffering is an inevitable consequence of existence. Permanent happiness cannot come from an impermanent, phenomenal, material world. Lasting happiness is possible only through the eternal (nitya) or the spiritual. The only unchanging principle in this ever changing world is the Supreme Self, the Divine Mother. She is the only object of meditation that can bring lasting happiness, both in the present and hereafter. Unless

the chariot (body), the reins (mind) and the intellect (buddhi), all serve the rider's (Self) purpose, the chariot is useless.

Thus Suratha (a good chariot) and Samadhi (a concentrated or focused mind) cannot serve their true purpose, cannot find true happiness till they meet the sage Medhas (intellect or insight or knowledge), who can lead them to the Goddess, to the Supreme Self. 'Medhas' is another word for 'buddhi' or 'intellect'. As per the Kathopanishad (1. 3. 3) buddhi or medhas is the charioteer. Now this is a perfect combination. An awakened intellect or awareness, a focussed mind capable of deep meditation, a strong and healthy body, together they can easily attain the best. Under the wise guidance of the sage Medhas, the king Suratha and the merchant Samadhi attain the best knowledge, knowledge of the Goddess, knowing whom they can attain best. Medhas can now raise their awareness from an ordinary, worldly awareness to a higher, spiritual awareness of the Goddess, the Supreme Self. And this is what happens finally. Eventually at the end of the narrative, the king and the merchant are fully inspired to seek the Goddess. Retiring to the bank of a river, they meditate and worship the Divine Mother devotedly. After three years she appears to them and offers each a boon. Suratha, who has unfinished business, asks for the return of his earthly kingdom, followed by an imperishable kingdom in the next life. The merchant Samadhi, on the other hand, has grown wise and dispassionate. He has become free from worldly attachment. His mind is now fixed only on Supreme knowledge, the Goddess. So he asks for the supreme

knowledge that will dissolve the bondage of worldly existence. This is true Samadhi. All other forms of Samadhi are incomplete, save Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This is the true significance of the three main characters with whom the Devi Mahatmyam begins and ends. Now let us examine the actual myth of the Goddess and her martial exploits.

As must be evident by now though the Devi mahatmyam is seemingly a narrative of the battle between the Devi and the asuras, there is a deeper significance to these demons and the battles. At one level it is also an allegory to the inner battle between the divine and the demoniac forces within the human psyche, between the positive and negative. The battlegrounds represent our own human consciousness, and its events symbolize our own experiences. The demons are symbolic of the psychic forces within the shadow. The Divine Mother is our own true being, our inherent divinity and wholeness, our very Self. Her clashes with the demons symbolize the outward and inward struggles we face daily. The Devi, personified simultaneously as the one supreme Goddess and also the many goddesses, confronts the demons of ahamkara or ego (our mistaken notion of who we are or what we identify ourselves with), of excessive tamas and rajas, that in turn give birth to other demons of excessive craving, greed, anger and pride, and of incessant citta vrttis. Thus the myth is an allegory to what is happening within our own consciousness, to the transformation of human consciousness. The threefold transformation of consciousness is described in the three sections or episodes of the Devi Mahatmyam.

First episode-The inner meaning of Madhu-Kaitabha myth

The first episode reveals the power of tamas, the power of delusion, how in our ordinary state of being, we are all deluded. The first episode reveals the Primordial Mother Adi Sakti or Moola Prakrti in her dark, deluding aspect (Tamas) that ensnares humankind through the psychological afflictions of ignorance and attachment, through the influence of tamas and rajas. It teaches us about the nature of reality at the most basic primordial level. Maha Vishnu has to awaken from the state of primal sleep in order to overcome the original demoniacal forces, Madhu (tamas) and Kaitabha (rajas). This is possible only through Maha Maya's grace, only if She frees Vishnu from the influence of Yoga Maya, the primordial inactive state predominated by cosmic Tamas.

There are two ways to understand Madhu and Kaitabha. One is suggested by the Mahabharata's version of the same myth where it is stated that the asura Madhu is of tamas while Kaitabha is of rajas. The Harivamsha version too suggests a similar interpretation by having the two asuras themselves declare, "By us is all this covered over with tamas and rajas. Thus Madhu and Kaitabha are the two original demoniacal forces of tamas and rajas. They try to overcome the creative and sattvic force (Brahma). All the three gunas are born simultaneously before the very beginning of a Kalpa. In fact the word 'kalpa' is the same as in the other related word 'sankalpa' that is suggestive of 'will' or 'resolve'. A Kalpa happens by the resolve or will of the Supreme Being. A Kalpa is one of the many continuous cycles of creative

manifestation, sustenance and dissolution that happen by the sankalpa (will or resolve) of the Supreme Being, who in some creation myths is equated with Lord Vishnu. Madhu-Kaitabha emerge from the mala (dirt or waste) from Vishnu's ears. The ears are symbolic of sound or Sabda which is another name for Nada that marks the start of cosmogenesis.

The three gunas are part of the same cosmic process of manifestation. Ever since creative manifestation starts the three gunas are in a state of disequilibrium, wherein they struggle towards ascendancy. The three gunas are part of the same veiling power of Prakrti or Maha Maya. Together they form the three strands that bind us to ignorance. However over a period of time Sattva is like a burnt rope because by its very nature it brings knowledge. That is why initially the ascendancy of Sattva is preferred over tamas and rajas. A burnt rope or a rope that will sooner or later be burnt cannot bind us for long. But till it is fully burnt even this rope can be binding. On the other hand the ascendancy of tamas and rajas are undesirable at all stages. As per classical Ayurvedic theory tamas and rajas are in fact manasika doshas that can act as psychological afflictions. They can potentially spoil (dosha: that which can darken or spoil) the psyche by leading to many other psychological afflictions. That is why the Supreme Being (Lord Vishnu) has to save sattva (Brahma) by subduing tamas (Madhu) and rajas (Kaitabha). But this is possible only through Maha Maya's grace, only if She frees Vishnu from the influence of Yoga Maya, the primordial inactive state predominated by cosmic Tamas.

The other approach to understanding Madhu and Kaitabha is etymological. Madhu denotes something sweet. Madhu is in fact the actual word for honey while Kaitabha denotes an insect. Thus Madhu and Kaitabha are honey and the honey bee. This world and its fruits are an extension of the Divine Mother's very own manifestation. In a way She is not separate from the world that is created by Her own Self. But if one hankers after the fruits of the world without being able to see Her behind this world or its fruits, sooner or later the inevitable result of this obsession with gathering honey is pain. Honey and the sting of the bee are inseparable. If you want honey you should dare the inevitable sting of the insect. We are all busily engaged in collecting one more drop of honey telling ourselves that this is the purpose of our lives. The more honey we collect the more the stings on our swollen faces. But we endure the pain of the sting preparing ourselves for the next drop of honey.

It is our ignorance that keeps us busily engaged in this perpetual cycle of gathering more honey daring more stings. This simple insight can be the start of the loosening of the grip of the world over the Self. It is so simple yet immensely powerful, the power of Maha Maya. One needs discernment (viveka) and dispassion (vairagya) to see through this beautiful play of Maha Maya. And that happens only through Divine grace, or through great merit in many lives, or through the grace of a Sadguru. Suratha the king and Samadhi the merchant find a Sadguru in the sage Medhas who can lead them to this insight by revealing the glory of Maha Maya to

them. Understanding the true nature of this world is important to be able to see the Supreme Being behind this manifest world. Otherwise the world can be a source of much misery and pain through its lure of honey and the inevitable pain of the sting. That is why the wise sage Medhas preferred to narrate the Madhu-Kaitabha myth to the king and the merchant when they seek his counsel since their predicament is surely related to the lure of the things of this world and the inevitable pain that they have experienced from it.

Note: The esoteric interpretation is not an afterthought as some might think after seeing varying interpretations by enthusiastic writers. The esoteric interpretation is inherent to the myth as will be evident when one examines the myth through various approaches. In fact multiple approaches lead us to the same interpretation. Etymological examination of the words used, cross-scriptural references, oral teaching from the Guru, various commentaries and finally the inner experiences that a practitioner goes through, all these provide more authority to the esoteric interpretation. Interestingly all these approaches are in harmony and point to a nearly precise esoteric meaning of the Devi Mahatmyam. Some writers have interpreted the demons and other allegories arbitrarily. But as affirmed here the interpretation cannot be loose or arbitrary and has to harmonise all the five approaches delineated above. It is not enough if an allegory makes spiritual or psychological sense if it is not etymologically in line. Nirukta too must agree. This is the approach used consistently in this book. For instance let us examine the esoteric interpretation

of Madhu-Kaitabha. Honey is sweet. It is heavy. Any sweet in less quantity is sattvic, but in excess it is tamasic and thereby dangerous. Madhu is thus potentially tamasic. The insect (Kaitabha) is famous for its busyness. “Busy as a bee” is a common expression. Busyness is inherent to rajas. Thus Kaitabha is rajas. As one can see the etymological interpretation is in line with the cross-scriptural references from the Mahabharata that clearly equate Madhu and Kaitabha with tamas and rajas. Of course the psycho-spiritual interpretation too fits very well with the creation myth of Madhu-Kaitabha and Brahma.

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